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# Video Games & Computer Entertainment®

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August 1991

## MULTIPLAYER GAMING

A LOOK AT HEAD-TO-HEAD, TWO-PLAYER AND  
MULTILOCATIONAL GAMING

### MAPS AND TIPS:

Taxan's  
G.I. Joe,  
Part II



Electronic Art's  
PowerMonger



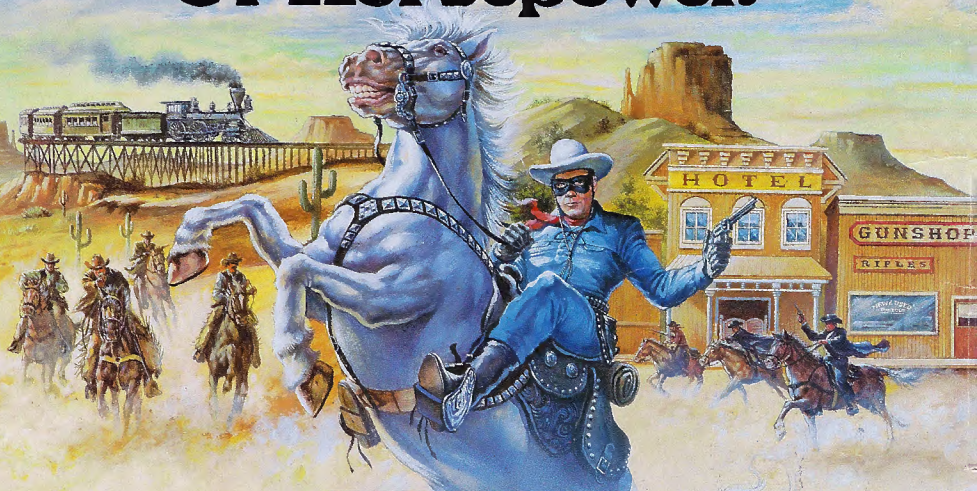
VG&CE'S 10  
TIPS FOR  
SMARTER  
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PURCHASING

Super  
Famicom  
Preview,  
Part III—  
What's  
New  
Overseas





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The overhead screens are the omeiest of all, and the lead will really fly as you confront the west's wildest gunfighters. You'll also rap with friendly townsfolk who think they have all the answers. Be careful not to let any stray bullets bounce off innocent schoolmarm's. That'll cost you important clues and put you within neck's length of the hangman's noose.

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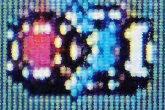
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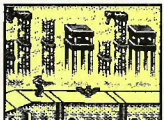
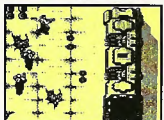
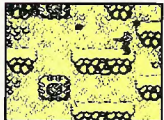


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Mmmmm, Operation C™ for Game Boy™ has all the brutal battle flavor of the NES hit Contra™. But here's the bite: this time it's Scorpion alone versus Black Viper—Red Falcan's partner in slime—who's turned a secret naval lab into an experimental alien freak factory.

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GAMES

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Cover: The Little Mermaid, based on the popular Disney movie, is the first video game designed specifically for young girls. Turn to page 38 for a detailed review of this new NES title.

Cover Art: The Little Mermaid, © The Walt Disney Company.

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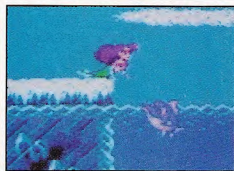
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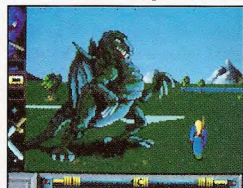
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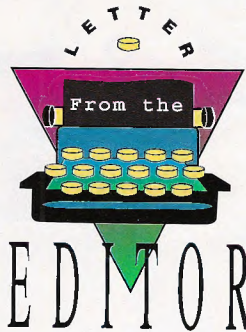
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**a**s ambassadors of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER the editors at Shogakukan, one

ENTERTAINMENT, Donn Nauert and I recently visited Japan. We went there to take in some of the action that sets the tone for what electronic entertainment we'll show on our shores, such as new Super Famicom games (see page 76). We also met with editors from various Japanese video-game magazines in an effort

to form an alliance, to help VG&CE become even better. In turn, we'll keep our Japanese counterparts in touch with U.S. video- and computer-game developments. This "partnership" will help us both be better informed, and thus better inform our respective readers.

It was obvious to Donn and I that there were serious cultural and language differences between our countries, the latter being a real stumbling block for our travels at times. Standing in the train station trying to determine the fare for our intended location became a 15-minute ordeal of trying to match Japanese characters on our map with the ones on the wall. And even though we had a McDonalds just off our hotel—the Western life is never far away—it was still quite a chore to get the order just right. Repeating "orange juice" louder and louder didn't seem to help bridge the gap much, take my word for it.

However, the U.S. and Japan aren't that different in our taste for electronic games. Mixing it up with

of Japan's largest magazine publishers, in a five-way *Bomberman* match was a lot of fun to participate in and watch from the sidelines.

As gamers will, we spent much of our spare time in search of the local arcade. By then we were familiar with the local currency, but were still shocked at the price of 100 yen per game or approximately 75¢ U.S.

From there we didn't see that many disparities; *Street Fighter II*, *S.C.I.* and even *Pole Position II* were among the machines, as well as some mah-jongg sit-downs.

While Donn took on *RaiDen*, I dabbled with some of the games, but actually spent more time spectating and absorbing the sights. For instance, some of the *Tetris* players were downright scary, maneuvering blocks that were falling like rain into perfect position.

Before we left for the evening, Donn got into a groove with *RaiDen*, to the enjoyment of a couple of the arcade residents, following one of the regulars who showed some tricks of his own. Donn must've learned something because he pulled some impossible saves out of his hat. Shaking my head in amazement and admiration, I looked over wordlessly to another player who had the same look on his face, and we grinned. Suddenly, language wasn't much of a barrier anymore.

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor





# R U A GENESIS GENIUS?

## PART 2

What's your story?

Take the Genesis Aptitude Test (G.A.T.) and find out. Write the answers to questions 8 through 14\* on your completed entry form, and send it in. Score high and you could win 3 Genesis titles from Electronic Arts just for being smart.

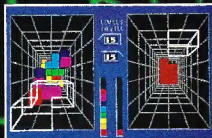
\*If you didn't take the first G.A.T. (questions 1-7)—no problem. It's never too late to become a Genius!

### G.A.T. QUESTION #9



**BLOCKOUT™**  
IS A BLAST-ACTION  
PUZZLE GAME WITH A UNIQUE  
3-D PERSPECTIVE AND:

- A. Nearly 750 combinations of blocks and pit layers.
- B. 11 challenging skill levels.
- C. A centerfold from the Pork Farmers Journal.
- D. A "rep" for being addicting.
- E. All of the above except for the picture of the pig.

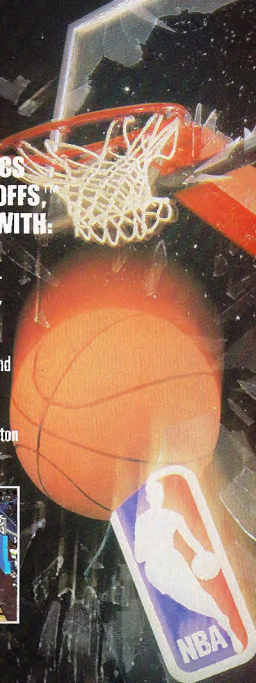


### G.A.T. QUESTION #8

# Q

**LAKERS  
VS. CELTICS  
AND THE NBA PLAYOFFS,  
IS THE ONLY GAME WITH:**

- A. Full-court fastbreak action featuring 10 hot NBA teams.
- B. Real NBA players slamming, jamming, and firing 3-point bombs.
- C. Half-time highlights, refs, and authentic player statistics.
- D. All of the above.
- E. L.A. glamour geeks and Boston leprechauns going 5 on 5.

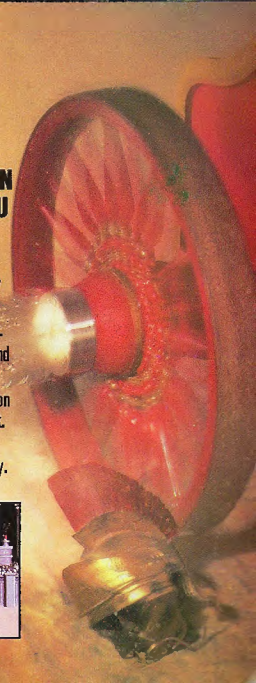


### G.A.T. QUESTION #10

# Q

**IN  
CENTURION  
THE ONLY THING YOU  
CAN'T DO IS:**

- A. Shatter your opponents' chariots, and whip their sorry behinds.
- B. Excoriate gastropod lifeforms.
- C. Crush Rome's enemies on land and sea.
- D. Date Cleopatra, ranked #1 on the all-time "bad" chicks list.
- E. Scare the ----- out of the Carthaginian elephant cavalry.





**Q:** NHL® HOCKEY GIVES YOU ALL THE FURIOUS ACTION, CRUNCHING SOUND, FLASHING BLADES, AND HARD-HITTING \_\_\_\_ OF THE BEST PLAYERS IN THE WORLD.

- A. Hip checks.
- B. Bounced checks.
- C. Brooding Czechs.
- D. Rice Chex™.



**Q:** IN PGA TOUR® GOLF, HOW CAN YOU FINISH IN THE MONEY?

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- B. Let our pros help you master special shots—chip, punch, putt from the fringe and more.
- C. Play tough against 6D PGA TOUR pros, on real courses, in real tournaments.
- D. All of the above.
- E. Fluff up these dorky tassel things on your golf shoes.



**Q:** IN MIGHT & MAGIC® YOU SAVE THE MYSTICAL LAND OF CRON FROM A CENTURY OF EVIL WHILE PLAYING:

- A. Six different fantasy roles in a band of heroic adventurers.
- B. Yahtzee™ with nasty boys.
- C. Dodgeball in traffic.
- D. *Stairway to Heaven* 326 times on the accordion.
- E. Knobby the wonder slug.



**Q:** THE ONLY THING JOHN MADDEN FOOTBALL™ WON'T GIVE YOU IS:

- A. Over 100 pro-style plays from John's own playbook.
- B. The speed and power skills of *real* pro players.
- C. Chronic turf toe and nervous dry heaves just before kickoff.
- D. Drives, spins, tough tackles, audibles, and penalties.
- E. A chance to win the "big show" on Super Sunday.





SEND IN YOUR ANSWERS AND SEE THE ENTRY FORM  
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**Free Electronic Arts Road Kit to the first 25 G.A.T. finishers who correctly answer all the questions. Earliest postmarks win. (Road Kits hold 8 Genesis carts.)**



#1 E #2 A, C, F #3 C #4 E #5 A #6 D #7 B

for the answers to G.A.T. Quiz Part 2.

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#8 \_\_\_\_\_ #9 \_\_\_\_\_ #10 \_\_\_\_\_ #11 \_\_\_\_\_ #12 \_\_\_\_\_ #13 \_\_\_\_\_ #14 \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

G.A.T. Quiz, Electronic Arts, 1820 Gateway Drive, San Mateo, CA 94404-2497

(Entry must be postmarked by 9/30/91, drawing will be held 10/18/91. Winner will be contacted by mail.)

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to be a Genesis game advisor to Electronic Arts. Give me a call sometime.

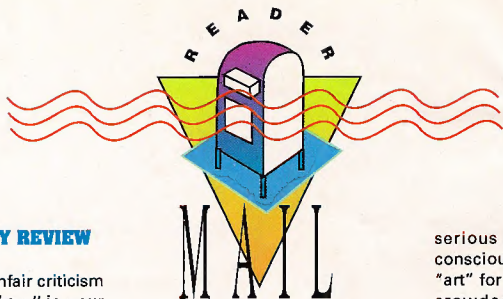
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**ELECTRONIC ARTS**

CIRCLE #103 ON READER SERVICE CARD





## ICED OVER HOCKEY REVIEW

Dear VG&CE:

I am writing to the unfair criticism of *Wayne Gretzky Hockey II* in your June 1991 issue (*Computer Game Reviews*). Let me make clear from the start that we have no trouble taking honest criticism. In the nearly three years that *Wayne Gretzky Hockey* has established itself as the predominant hockey program in the market, we have had countless reviews. This is the first time I felt it necessary to respond. That should tell you something.

Although I could make numerous picky comments, let me concentrate on one or two of the more glaring examples of [reviewer Bill Kunkel's] failed logic and lack of knowledge on the subject. Your reviewer starts off by using *Gamestar* and *SporTime* as his "classic" barometer by which to judge Gretzky's "action and strategy." If the reviewer enjoys these kinds of hockey games, he is entitled to do so, but it is patently unfair to try and compare a program such as *WGH*, which is a serious attempt to create a real physical model of hockey, with mere "entertainments" that are little more than large players who skate about rather aimlessly prior to dropping their gloves and fighting. This is an important difference between true simulations and computer "games." Quite often, reality is the stuff of which a novice's ideal is not made. This is especially true of sports. After all, how many "armchair quarterbacks" can really play as well as they talk? I would be willing to venture that your reviewer may play hockey games, but does not know a great deal about the sport of ice hockey.

Your reviewer also did not appreciate our "top down" view because

he (obviously) likes side view, large character animation (a la *SporTime*). Wayne Gretzky would obviously disagree. He speaks to this very issue in the *WGH* manual. Others who would disagree are the five NHL coaches that are using *WGH* to gauge player performances, the professional hockey reporters at the *New York Daily News*, *Washington Post* and ESPN, the professional hockey players such as Larry Murphy (Penguins), Marty McSorley (Kings), Mark Howe (Flyers) and numerous other players and coaches—the professionals of the sport. What other computer "game" on the market today can make the claim that it is used professionally by the pros? The simple answer: not one. The fact is that large players viewed from the side do not work well in real hockey. The puck moves too fast and is obscured by other foreground players over 35% of the time. Large players shown from the top require that less than one third of the rink be shown at any one time. This is unacceptable as the puck is cleared or moved onto the opposing zone over half the time it is in play. The required rink movement would keep you in a constant state of disorientation. As far as our players "zipping around at high speed" and not caring for the game play, the players skate at exactly the right range of proportional speed for the size of the rink upon which they play. Unless you use the slow option to set them to play at slow speed, you just have to get used to playing real hockey at real hockey speed.

The previous are but a few of the

serious issues where we made a conscious decision not to sacrifice "art" for life. We felt the market was crowded enough already with "sports games" that were more like arcade battles than serious attempts to model their sport realistically. We wanted to create something that did justice to the grace, complexity and elegance of the sport that is really hockey. The professionals who play this sport and over a hundred thousand others think we have succeeded. I would submit that as the ultimate acid test of any product. So, while we realize true models are not everyone's cup of tea, we would invite your reviewer to sit down with us and let us teach him a little about ice hockey and demonstrate why this game is already a classic.

—Christopher Weaver  
President, Bethesda Softworks  
Rockville, Maryland

*Bill Kunkel responds: We are, of course, all entitled to our opinions, Christopher, and it is my experience that we rarely see the flaws in our own children. In rereading my review of WGH2, for example, I found it pithy, insightful and on-target. So rather than banter opinions, let's bring the discussion back to the world of facts: I do, in fact, have some small knowledge of hockey. I first attended N.Y. Ranger games at the old Madison Square Garden during the halcyon days of the early '50s and have watched players like Lou Fontinato (who threw punches at the entire Maple Leaf team), Gump Worsley (a maskless, crewcut*

Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to Reader Mail, VG&CE, 3171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.



# READY, AIM, PUNISH!

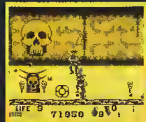
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CIRCLE #104 ON READER SERVICE CARD.



and pug-ugly gladiator guarding his crease), Boom Boom Geoffrion, Rocket Richard, Guy Lafleur, the Esposito Brothers and, of course, Wayne Gretzky, who has dominated his era like no player ever has. I LOVE hockey. Any time you want to discuss the coaching virtues of Freddie Shero versus Scotty Bowman, just give me a call.

Since you are working under the notion that you are not creating "mere 'entertainments'" or "computer 'games,'" both of which you refer to disparagingly, we don't really have any disagreement. As a simulation, WGH2 is solid stuff or, as I said in my review: "The strategic innovations and multiple options are marvelous, but they must connect with a playable game for those values to be realized." If I were reviewing WGH2 for "Sports Simulation Monthly," a hypothetical publication dealing extensively with producing realistic computer models of team sports, I would have spent more time playing up its strengths. But in case you haven't noticed the name of this magazine, we don't think "games" and "entertainment" are dirty words—and the fact is, as a hockey fan for over three decades and a scratch goalie much of my childhood, I found WGH2 almost totally unplayable as an action-strategy contest, and I simply said so. Moreover, this product is not being sold as a "strategic model" for use by NHL eggheads; it's being sold as a computer hockey game. It doesn't help the computerist struggling with his keyboard and going blind from trying to follow dot-sized players to know that pro hockey is using it to "gauge player performances." Repackage it as a stat-replay game, and I would evaluate it quite highly.

On the subject of top-down versus three-quarters perspective: If top-down is so superior, why don't television broadcasts make more than minimal use of it? Finally, if you were so proud of the game's visual presentation, why didn't you show it on the back of the box, where instead we saw two screen

shots, neither of which displayed that fabled top-down view?

## WANTS AN ARCADE FIGHT

Dear VG&CE:

I've played *Final Fight* in the arcades, and I think it was the best game there. I wanted to know where I could buy or order one and how much it would cost.

I've also been thinking about ordering a Super Famicom and *Final Fight*. I've seen photos of the Super Famicom version of *Final Fight*. Although the graphics are quite spectacular, it's still not enough for me, not to mention the Super Famicom's version is minus the two-player mode.

—Ben Ponce  
Tarpon Springs, Florida

If you can afford it, getting an arcade version of a game can be very enjoyable. It might be a good way to save quarters too—though a coin-op machine is a very expensive piggy bank.

If you want to purchase an arcade game, the best choice is to go to your local arcade. Usually, the company that sells or leases arcade games to arcade owners puts a sticker with its name and address printed on it on the game machines. Otherwise, look in your area Yellow Pages under the heading "Amusement."

On your last point, while the Super Famicom version of *Final Fight* is nice, lots of people have said that the missing two-player mode is a big mistake for Capcom and that the game play and animation are lacking in some spots of the SF version.

## TURBOCHIP OFF THE OLD CD

Dear VG&CE:

I have heard that NEC plans to release a new CD-ROM system TurboChip that will replace the existing card required to operate the TurboGrafx-CD Player. I understand that

the new card will have an all new BIOS (basic input/output system) for communicating with the CD unit and an additional 192K of RAM that can be used as a buffer for games on CD. I already own a TurboGrafx-16 CD and would like to know if and how I will be able to get one of the new TurboChip cards. Also, when is this new TurboChip likely to be available?

Your magazine is excellent! Please keep up your coverage of NEC and TurboGrafx games.

—John K. Edwards, Jr.  
Macon, Georgia

In case you weren't aware, John, VG&CE has a sister magazine called TURBOPLAY, which is published bimonthly and covers nothing but TG-16 products. If you are interested, turn to page 95 for a free sample issue and a subscription offer.

Regarding the new TG-16 BIOS card, it has been in the works for some time, and the current date for release should be sometime in late 1991 or early 1992. According to our sources, the first game to use the new features of the BIOS will be Loom, the popular computer game from Lucasfilm Games. Of course, this may change by the time the new system actually appears on store shelves.

## CORRECTION

A few of our readers caught a mistake in our Super Famicom preview (VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, June 1991). In the chart of upcoming SF games for Japan, we listed the cartridge memory size under a column called "Megabytes." Of course, the column should have read "Megabits."

Also, in our May 1991 "Summer Computer Games Preview," we erroneously stated that *Red Baron* was a Brøderbund game. It was actually created by Dynamix and distributed by Sierra On-Line. Our apologies for any inconvenience caused by these mistakes.



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**E**ven the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT has designed *Tip Sheet* to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as, "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or, "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem on a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to

VG&CE,  
9171 Wilshire Blvd.,  
Suite 300  
Beverly Hills, CA  
90210  
Attn: *Tip Sheet*



by Donn Nauert

In *Fester's Quest*, how do you get the fourth life bar at the Addams House? Can you help?

In *Abadax*, how do you beat the leader in Level 5-2? My friend says that there's a stage select and invincibility. If so, can you tell me what they are?

—David Trattan  
Panorama City, California

To get the fourth life bar, you'll need to find the secret entrance to the Addams Mansion, which is located in the hedge along the house.

Here's an invincibility code for *Abadax*: During the title screen, press A, A, U, B, B, D, A, B and **START**.



In *Acclaim's Double Dragon III* the most effective move against the lady master is the cyclone spin kick.

firebirds at me, turns into a firesnake when she disappears and pushes me up against the wall. Whenever I knock her down, she disappears and comes back as a snake right where I'm standing. How can I avoid her? The fact that I usually don't have much energy left makes it that much more difficult. Can you please spare some codes or strategies?

—Robert Shaw  
Shelby, North Carolina

I recently bought *Double Dragon III*, and I can't pass the lady master at the end. She

—Thai Trinh  
Rosemead, California

throws fireballs along the floor, She is pretty tough to get by, but if you can use Chin and Ranzau to get through the first parts of Mission 5, then you can have Billy and/or Jimmy at a higher strength when you face her. The most effective move to use on her is the cyclone spin kick, and you have to hit her 25 times. To avoid her, move diagonally throughout the screen. It does take some time and patience.







Help! On *Ultima Exodus* I've looked everywhere for the Mork of Snoke and can't find it anywhere. Could you please tell me what cave and level I can find it in? Thanks for your time.

—Jomie McDonnell  
Paradise, California

I'm having trouble with the FC! game *Ultima Exodus* for the NES. I don't know how to get the spells death and recall, even though I keep spending gold at the shrines. I know it does matter which race, so I've included the race and profession of my party. I have a Human Ranger, a Fuzzy Wizard, a Bobbit Druid and a Dwarf Cleric. Which of these people can have the spells, and how do I get them?

—John Cunningham  
Montgomery, Alabama

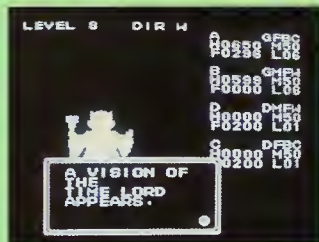
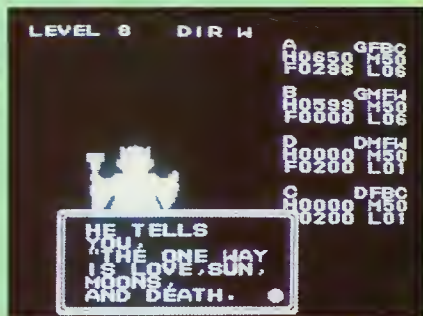
P.S.—I've heard of a Time Lord, but don't know if the people in the town were telling the truth. If it is true, where can I find him? One more thing: How do you use the Trons spell?

Well, judging by the number of letters we've received over the last few weeks, there's an increase in the number of *Ultima Exodus* problems—as well as *Legend of Zelda*, which we'll get to next issue.

Okay, to answer the first question, the Mork of Snoke can be found in the Cave of Sol on the eighth level only. There's only one of them, unlike the rest of the morks, which you can find in various different locations. Once on the eighth level, you'll need to work your way down to the bottom (southern) part of the map. The Mork of Snoke is located at what would be 6:30 or 7:00 on a watch. Here are the directions once you've located the center of the level: The path to the mork has a lot of wind, so you won't be able to use a torch or create magic. From the lodder in the center, move one step south, three steps west (through the walls), two steps south, two steps east, two steps south, six steps west, two steps south and five steps east.

Now to answer the second letter: The only two professions that can perform those magic spells are the Wizard (death) and the Cleric (recall). Of your party, the Fuzzy Wizard and the Dwarf Cleric can perform the two spells. The Fuzzy Wizard will have 99 maximum magic points, and the Dwarf Cleric can have up to 75 points. Based on their race and profession, the Human Ranger can have 37 (half of the weaker magic ability) and the Bobbit Druid can have 49 (half of both magic abilities).

After you spend the required amount of gold, walk around to allow your magic power to build up to the highest level. If you have 75 or more magic points for the Wizard or Cleric and still cannot get the death or recall spells to appear, press **SELECT** when you have the magic spells up on the screen to scroll to the second part of the list. They should be there.



Remember that the path to the Mark of Snake in *Ultima Exodus* has a lot of wind, so you won't be able to use a torch or create magic.





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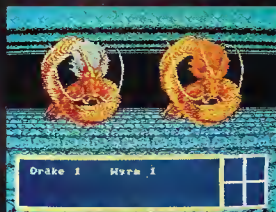
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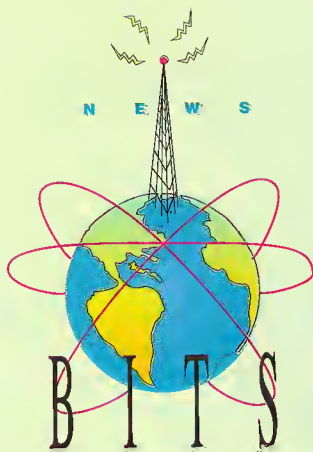
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### Super NES Debuts

As expected, the Summer CES brought the introduction of Nintendo's Super NES system. It is shown with the NES and Game Boy below. The



Pictures courtesy of Nintendo of America Inc.

system will retail for \$199.95 and will include the control deck, two eight-button controllers and *Super Mario World*, already known to many as *Super Mario 4*.

On the software front, Nintendo also announced that it would be releasing *Pilotwings*, *F-Zero*, *Super Play Action Football*, *SimCity* and *Zelda III* (late 1991). These titles are among the 18 NES titles that Nintendo says will be out by December 1991.

### Disney Announces Capcom Videcade Game Center

In a media extravaganza held at the Anaheim Magic Kingdom on March 19, Disneyland President Jack Lindquist and Capcom U.S.A.

President George Nakayama announced the opening of the Videcade game center. Celebrities on-hand included Macaulay Culkin, star of the box office hit *Home Alone*.

The new game center presented by Capcom U.S.A. will include 30 video monitors connected to Nintendo Entertainment System,

featuring *Ducktales*, *Chip 'n' Dale Rescue Rangers*, *Mickey Mousecapade*, *Disney's Ad-*



ventures in the *Magic Kingdom* and in early June, *Tale Spin*. Gamers will be entitled to three full minutes of free game-playing.

The Videcade game center is being presented as a special element in "Disney Afternoon—Live at Disneyland," and will remain in place through autumn.

### Atari Scraps Panther Video-Game Console

A spokesperson for Atari has confirmed that the Panther project has been discontinued. The company

spokesperson went on to say, that by terminating the Panther, the company would be able to concentrate on other undertakings.

A second company spokesperson has also confirmed that Atari was currently working on "other projects."

### Nintendo Settles Price-Fix Claims, Will Issue \$25 Million in Redemption Certificates

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) reached a settlement with Nintendo concerning the allegations made by New York, Maryland and other states that the company and its retailers set resale prices for the Nintendo Entertainment System. Although Nintendo denied violation of antitrust laws, it agreed to send out \$5 instant-redemption certificates to all owners listed in their data base in the participating states. The redemption certificates are worth \$25 million. Additionally, Nintendo agreed to pay \$1.75 million in costs of administration to the states participating in the suit, plus \$3 million for those states to use in enforcing state antitrust laws. The agreement also provides for other states and D.C. to join in the settlement.

The redemption certificates are good toward the purchase of any NES video game that bears the Nintendo quality seal. The certificates will automatically be sent to consumers who purchased Nin-





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Howard Lincoln, Nintendo vice-president, explained why the company made the settlement: "While we were emphatic during negotiations and continue to insist that Nintendo had done nothing improper or in violation of the antitrust laws, we decided to enter into this comprehensive and nationwide settlement in order to maintain the goodwill our company enjoys with millions of consumers who play Nintendo games."

### American Video to Redeem Nintendo Coupons

American Video Entertainment announced that they will accept the Nintendo instant-redemption coupons toward the purchase of any of their NES-compatible games. Consumers can redeem the coupons by calling the company's hotline. In addition, American Video will donate \$1 for every coupon they redeem to a special charity fund. The fund will be distributed to consumer and charitable organizations that champion education, support of the handicapped and consumer rights. Interested organizations should call American Video Entertainment's hotline, (800) HOT-4AVE.

American Video will send the coupons they receive to Nintendo for cash redemption, and any money received from Nintendo will also be added to the charitable fund in a program the company calls "Coupons for Kids." In addition, the company will donate \$6 for each game sold through their hotline at full price.

"We had to protect consumers' right to choose the games they want to play..." said William Welling, CEO of American Video. Richard Frick, the company's president, continued, "We believe consumers are looking to us to fight for their right to choose, and we believe this

special program is one way we can reward them for their faith."

### Lucasfilm Introduces Computer Adventures, Video Games

Lucasfilm unveiled two new computer adventures at the Summer Consumer Electronic Show, both sequels to highly acclaimed programs. *Indiana Jones and the Fate of Atlantis* is the first computer game starring Indiana Jones that did not come from the movies. This all-new adventure finds Jones in a race with the Nazis to find the lost city of Atlantis, with a little help (and some hindrance as well) from his traveling companion, psychic/archaeologist Sophia Hapgood.

*The Secret of Monkey Island II* revives villainous Evil Ghost Pirate LeChuck, then sets hero Guybrush Threepwood on a quest for scattered map pieces and the secret that will permanently eliminate LeChuck.

Lucasfilm also displayed the completed version of *Star Wars*, which is said to have the most advanced 8-bit graphics ever seen, and *Defenders of Dynaton City*, both for play on Nintendo. *Defenders* features a team of comic superheroes fighting the manufacturers of Proto-Cola with such weapons as hammer head smash, slashing buzzsaw body, bombarding banana bombs and even a heroic dog with an atomic powered bite.

### The Addams Family Gets CD-ROM Game

NEC Technologies signed a licensing agreement with Paramount Pictures to produce a compact disc video game based on *The Addams Family* movie for play on the TurboGrafx-16. The game, to be developed by Icom Simulations

(*Sherlock Holmes, Déjà Vu!*), is expected to be completed in time for release in conjunction with the movie's November debut. The storyline of the game will follow the film's plot. The game will be developed using CD-ROM technology and will include digitized audio of actual human dialog and realistic game play.

The movie will star Anjelica Houston, Raul Julia and Christopher Lloyd, and its specific plot has not yet been announced.

### Wizardry Gets Hint

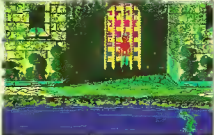
Sir-Tech announced release of the Bane of the Cosmic Forge *Hint Guide*. According to Robert Sirotek, Sir-Tech's vice-president, the guide was produced to satisfy gamers' requests. "We felt that the hint guide would enhance their game play," Sirotek explained. "Although our hotline is operated seven days a week and has been taking over 200 calls a day, many gamers said they would prefer to have a guide available for those midnight emergencies."

The guide contains maps, hints and answers to the games puzzles. It's available direct from Sir-Tech for \$5 plus \$1.50 shipping.

### An Old Favorite Gets a New Look

Sierra's first 3-D adventure game *King's Quest I* (Amiga version) is back sporting a face lift. Text, background and animation have all been upgraded, along with a new, fully orchestrated soundtrack. The SCI (Sierra Creative Interpreter) format, available only since *King's Quest IV*, has also been added for enhanced use of text parser and mouse.

"We decided to upgrade some Sierra classics to the newer standards in graphics and sound. Starting with *King's Quest I* was a natural



since it launched the best-selling adventure game series of all time, which has sold well over 1 million units," said Sierra CEO, Ken Williams.

The Amiga version of *King's Quest I* requires one meg of memory and sells for \$59.95.

### Koei Ends Contest; Sneak-Peeks New Games

Koei Corporation announced the grand-prize winner in the "How Well Do You Know Your History? Contest." Terry Barkley from Mt. Pleasant, Michigan, received a Sony Handicam, and 200 other winners received either T-shirts or software.

The company gave a sneak peek to VG&E of the NES titles planned for winter release. *Romance of the Three Kingdoms II* casts the gamer as a





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general at the end of the second Han Dynasty of China. It's said to have better graphics and more detailed scenarios than the first *Romance* and has improved tactical and strategic options. It should be available in August.

The company looked to Western history for the next two war games. *L'Empereur* puts the player in Napoleon's life, to relive his rise to power through battles across 18th-century Europe. *Uncharted Waters* lets the player sail for Spain and Portugal in a re-creation of ocean explorations. The game combines elements of role-playing with strategy in a simulation of the best (and worst) of sea voyages during the 16th century.

### Jaleco Sweeps Give Cash, Trips to Winners

Jaleco's "Batter Up Sweepstakes" (for promotion of their *Bases Loaded II: Second Season* video game) drew over 5,000 entries. Mark Schneider of Racine, Wisconsin, was the lucky winner of a personalized baseball bat and a trip for two



to the Louisville Slugger baseball bat factory in Louisville, Kentucky. Other winners received bats, batting gloves and T-shirts.

The company's *Astyanax* "Cash in Hand" Sweepstakes drew 170,000+ entries, and the \$5,000 grand prize went to Tammie Steadman of Baytown, Texas. Five additional winners received awards of \$1,000 each.

### Carmen to Go Where We've All Been Before

The latest chapter of the *Carmen Sandiego* crime story will take sleuths deep into American history as they try to locate Carmen and her gang members. *Where in*

*America's Past Is Carmen Sandiego?* stretches over 1,000 years of American history, placing heavy emphasis on American culture and regional history.

Like the preceding *Carmen Sandiego* games, the program comes packaged with a special reference book. *What Happened When* is a 1,300-page encyclopedia of America's past that covers an omnibus of subjects, including: science, art, music, theater, philosophy, sports, fashion, folkways, religion and politics.

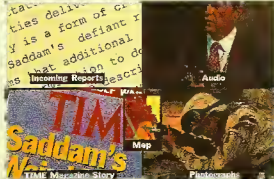
The six-disk game features 45 possible destinations and nine historical time periods. VGA location graphics in 32 colors, artwork ranging from paintings to photographs and background music should make this *Carmen*, the fifth in the series, the most entertaining to date.

### Desert Storm Is CD ROM

*Time* magazine started a new chapter in its publishing history with its first multimedia magazine on CD-ROM. A joint venture between *Time* magazine and Warner New Media, a subsidiary of Time Warner, Inc., resulted in *Desert Storm: The First Draft of History*, a week-by-week look at the war. The CD-ROM disk contains the equivalent of over 6,000 pages of information.

The disk contains dispatches from *TIME* correspondents, pool reports, audio recordings and hundreds of photographs. The user can follow the evolution of the war week by week through correspondents' reports and files, profiles of Saddam Hussein and other personalities, maps, photos, weapons glossary, audio interviews and analyses and a complete time line.

Stan Cornyn, president of Warner New Media, was understandably proud of the new, innovative product. "We've tried to bring the immediacy of *Time* magazine to



electronic publishing. That means layers of depth beyond the one-time experience of news. We hope this 'first draft of history' will present the news as never before."

*Desert Storm: The First Draft of History* is designed to be used with a Macintosh computer and CD-ROM disk drive and retails for \$39.99 in computer-software stores.

### Grand Canyon on Disk

Now armchair travelers can visit the Grand Canyon without ever leaving home. *Fly the Grand Canyon*, from Hyacinth (Norcross, Georgia), couples a flight simulator with stereo 3-D graphics to produce a tour of the 1800-square-mile canyon. The database uses 3-million points of topographical data with a horizontal resolution of 100 feet and a vertical resolution of 25 feet.

Flyers pilot the plane through the rugged terrain using keyboard or joystick control. A pause mode produces a full resolution image (though not a photographic rendering).

*Fly the Grand Canyon* requires an IBM PC-AT or its compatible with 512K of memory, a VGA or EGA with 256K display memory and a hard disk.

Fred Tuck, the designer, has several additional data banks for future computer tours. Although it's too early to predict the next Hyacinth subject, it seems likely that it will be an-

other national park in the American West.

### IBM's Not "Blue" Anymore

IBM lost the first round in its fight for exclusive use of the nickname "Big Blue." Seems the company didn't get around to registering the nickname with the Patent and Trademark Office until a couple of years ago, when they found that the moniker was already in use by Big Blue Products of Northport, New York. The federal Trademark Trial and Appeal Board refused to cede the title to IBM, pending a trial.

IBM got the nickname from journalists in the 1960s for the color of its large mainframe, but until recently the company avoided use of "Big Blue" in its advertisements.

### EA Shows Super NES Games

Electronic Arts announced three 16-bit video-game titles for play on the 16-bit Super NES. *John Madden Football*, *PGA Tour Golf* and *Lakers Vs. Celtics in the NBA Playoffs* will debut in their new formats later this year.

All three sports titles were previously released in the 16-bit format for play on IBM computers and Sega Genesis video games. These versions are said to have improvements that take advantage of the new NES format.

### California Dreams of Politics

The latest title from California Dreams is a thought-



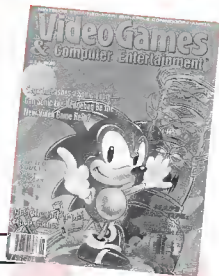
provoking look at Poland's politics. According to company spokesmen, it's an entertaining experience in national and world politics for



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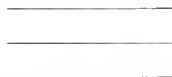
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history students and role-players.

**Solidarity** puts the gamer into Poland's workers' union in a struggle to lead Poland to freedom. Real-life obstacles, such as Soviet military might and economic pressures, make take-over a painstaking affair through Poland's seven regions as the player sets up demonstrations and strikes and directs activists. The game will be available this autumn for play on IBM, Amiga and Macintosh computers.

California Dreams has shipped *Street Rod 2*, a sequel to their earlier contest. The expanded construction set/racing game gives players 25 cars and 60 spare parts, including under the hood parts, tires and custom paint jobs.

### Spectrum HoloByte Announces Sweepstakes Winners

Winners of the "Drive It! Fly It! Play It! Win It! Sweepstakes" were announced. The three contests each had grand prizes of dream trips, in support of Spectrum HoloByte's driving and flight simulations and the Russian "Tris" series.

Dave Butler (West Covina, California), who won the *Stunt Driver* sweeps, will attend the Jim Russell School of Racing at the Laguna Seca

Randy Bradshaw (Columbia, Maryland) will attend Air Combat USA School in Fullerton, California, where he'll fly a Marchetti fighter bomber, learn how to fly in close formation and even perform a little bit of one-on-one dog-fighting.

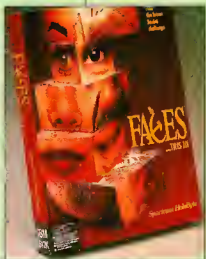
Jeff Abbott (San Diego, California) and his fiancée will take a ten-day tour of the Soviet Union, where they'll visit Kiev, Leningrad and Moscow, in honor of the Soviet software games *Tetris*, *Welltris* and *Faces... Tris III*.

### New Distribution Deals

Acclaim and Mirrorsoft reached an agreement whereby Mirrorsoft will distribute Acclaim and LJN software in Europe and Australasia. "We are extremely excited about our agreement with Mirrorsoft because it connects us with one of the most prominent and prestigious publishing forces in Europe," commented Gregory

Fischbach, Acclaim's chairman.

Sir-Tech signed a distribution agreement with Rushware of Düsseldorf, Germany. Among other agreements, Rush will be the exclusive



European distributor of the German translation of *Wizardry—Bane of the Cosmic Forge*. "Rushware is clearly a key player for us," said Robert Sirotek, vice-president of Sir-Tech. "We are pleased to be associated with such a fine company."

### Top Coin-Ops of April 1991

Figures courtesy of *RePlay* magazine are based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

#### Best Upright Videos

1. *Race Drivin'* by Atari
2. *GP Rider* by Sega

3. *Laser Ghost* by Sega
4. *Space Gun* by Taito
5. *G-Loc* by Sega
6. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
7. *Pit-Fighter* by Atari
8. *Rampart* by Atari
9. *Galaxy Force* by Sega
10. *Final Lap* by Atari

#### Best Coin-Op Software

1. *High Impact* by Williams
2. *Street Fighter* by Capcom
3. *Growl* by Taito
4. *Sengokuji* by SNK
5. *Final Fight* by Capcom
6. *Blood Bros.* by Fabeek
7. *Cyberlip* by SNK
8. *Raiden* by Fabeek
9. *Ninja Combat* by SNK
10. *Ghost Pilot* by SNK

#### Best New Videos

1. *Mad Dog McCree* by American Laser Games
2. *F-15* by MicroProse
3. *Cisco Heat* by Jaleco

### Top 10 IBM PC Video Games for March 1991

The Software Publishers Association released their hit list for March, showing the top IBM PC computer games and video games, based on analysis of sales by leading retailers Babbages, CompUSA (formerly Softwarehouse), Waldensoft and Electronics Boutique.

Strategic Simulation's *Eye of the Beholder* topped the top-ten computer games list in its first month of release. On the video-game hits list, Konami's *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* continues to dominate sales, with *The Simpsons* (Acclaim) finishing in a close second.

### Top 10 IBM PC Games for March 1991

This List	Mo. No.	Title	Publisher
1	*	<i>Eye of the Beholder</i>	SSI
2	*	<i>Space Quest IV</i>	Sierra On-Line
3	1	<i>King's Quest V</i>	Sierra On-Line
4	5	<i>Wing Commander</i>	Origin
5	*	<i>Death Knights of Krynn</i>	SSI
6	2	<i>SimEarth</i>	Maxis
7	7	<i>SimCity</i>	Maxis
8	6	<i>Flight Simulator</i>	Microsoft
9	16	<i>Links</i>	Access
10	11	<i>A-10 Tank Killer</i>	Sierra On-Line

\* First month in the Top 10.

### Top 10 Video Games for March 1991

This List	Mo. No.	Title	Publ./System
1	1	<i>T.M.N.T.</i>	Konami/NES
2	2	<i>The Simpsons</i>	Acclaim/NES
3	*	<i>NBA All Star Basketball</i>	LJN/GB
4	3	<i>Super Mario Land</i>	Nintendo/GB
5	20	<i>Lakers Vs. Celtics</i>	EA/Genesis
6	4	<i>Super Mario Bros. 3</i>	Nintendo/NES
7	7	<i>Double Dragon III</i>	Acclaim/NES
8	*	<i>Operation C</i>	Konami/GB
9	6	<i>John Madden Football</i>	EA/Genesis
10	8	<i>Tetris</i>	Nintendo/NES

\* First month in the Top 10.

### Midway Goes Back to the Dark Ages

Dinosaurs, not dogs, are man's best friend in *TROG*, Bally/Midway's latest coin-op. The player, cast as Spike, Rex, Given or Bloop, and pet Dino journey through 49 different islands pursued by the villainous *TROG* and his sidekick one-eyed caveman, who wants to have your dino for dinner. Escape bottomless pits and fire storms with a hungry *TROG* hot on your heels and ready to use clubs, fire, spring-shoes, rolling wheels and an arsenal of prehistoric weaponry.

Digitized graphics, and stone age music add excitement to *TROG*. The player's best offensive weapon is his loyal pet dinosaur, who can be transformed into a fire-spitting dragosaur or a *TROG*-devouring tyrannosaurus rex by consuming the appropriate magical object.

### Pin-Bot Meets His Mate

After five years, William's Electronics has made Pin-Bot a happy pinball hero with the creation of *The Machine Bride of Pin-Bot*. The action starts with the first shot up the bride's shuttle ramp, activating voice circuits. The next few shots open Machine Bride's eyes and breathe life into her while Pin-Bot watches from his own mini-playfield. Players must spin the Big Wheel to double scores during multiball play and may even get an opportunity to win the billion-point shot.

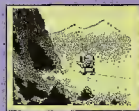


Raceway in Monterey, California. He and his wife will spend seven days in Monterey.



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the Cleaner #2	9/95
the Holder	2/5
nt Gun	2/5
Joypad	6/14
Joypad	6/14
Joystick	2/9
Max Joypad	6/14
er Glove	10/22
er Pad	8/19
Shot Roand	4/12
Adapter	4/15
N Roller	2/5
ite	18/32
Wires Rem	8/16
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Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint.

Blow the dust off those old games, and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper, and send them to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt. The author of each new tip we use will receive \$10. Write neatly and be sure to include your name and address!



Here's a key to the abbreviations:

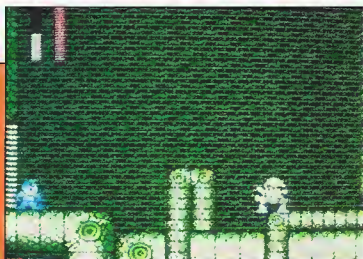
U = Up  
D = Down  
L = Left  
R = Right  
A = "A" button  
B = "B" button  
C = "C" button

## Mega Man III

(CAPCOM FOR THE NES)



During play you can, on Controller 2, press U and A to cause the enemy bosses or other characters to freeze on the screen. You can't move left or right, but you can jump, so make sure you're facing the boss before you start blasting away at him.



## PSYCHIC WORLD

(SEGA FOR THE GAME GEAR)



Ari Comet of Beachwood, Ohio, has sent in an Easter egg that will let you access a sound test as well as a level select. Simply press and hold U and L, 1 and 2 then press START during the main title screen. If you've done this correctly, you'll see "Special Mode" on the screen along with "Sound Test ED." You can adjust the ED by pressing U to increase the number of the test. If you press 1 and 2 while it reads ED, a number will appear on the last line, and it should now read "Round NO 1." Press U or D and you can scroll through and pick which of the four levels to start at. When you begin play on any of the four, you'll start with all the items you would have normally received playing to that point. This is a nice find, Ari. Thanks.

## Double Dragon III

(ACCLAIM FOR THE NES)



Jason Hess and his brother, both of Clinton, Michigan, have found a new move not mentioned in the instruction booklet. To do the move you must be in the two-player mode. Have Billy and Jimmy Lee stand next to each other and use the Cyclone Spin-Kick. Both characters will lock arms, back to back, and the kick will be twice as long and powerful. Thanks for the great Easter egg, guys.



continued on page 32



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# James Pond

(ELECTRONIC ARTS FOR THE GENESIS)



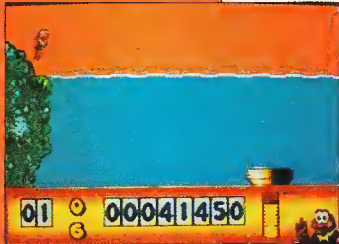
In this game there are a few places that will allow you to warp to higher missions in the game. In each mission you must first save or gather all available fish, lobster or gold before you can warp. The photos below will show you where to locate the warps. Thanks go out to three people for sending in these Easter eggs: Richard Devorin of Elmhurst, New York; Garret Ulmer of Oxnard, California; and Andy Taylor of Coronado, California.

In the first mission you must save all the lobster for two known warps to open. The first is located in the seaweed to the left of the entrance pipe next to a white rock. Position Double Bubble Seven over the seaweed and push down. This will take you to Mission 6.

Also on Mission 1 is a warp that will take you to Mission 11. Once you have saved the lobster, go to the far left, and jump out of the water onto the ledge. Move to the edge and push down.

You can find a warp in Mission 2 that will take you to Mission 10. Save all the fish from the toxic waste, then move to the right of the entrance pipe at the start of the flat ground and push down.

Finally, in Mission 4 there is a warp that will take you to Mission 8. After you find all the gold bars, go to the top-left corner of the Section-1 screen below the entrance pipe. Go to the position shown in the photo and push down.



## Dr. Mario

(Nintendo for the NES)



Kristi Smith of Westminster, California, was the first to send in this Easter egg. Kristi found that if you wait long enough on the intermission screen (where the three viruses are sitting on the tree), an item will fly across the top of the screen. It only works with certain virus level/speed combinations.

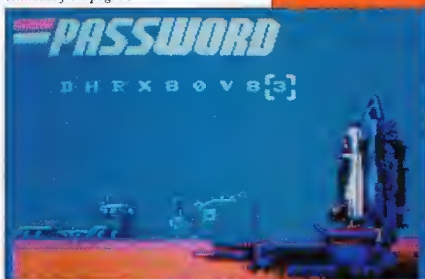
Virus level	Speed	Picture
5	Med.	Book
10	Med.	Chicken
15	Med.	Spray Paint
5	High	Turtle
10	High	Pig
15	High	Witch



continued on page 34







# G.I. Joe

(TAXAN FOR THE NES)



Here's a complete list of codes for this game. The codes listed are about as good as you can get through normal play:

## QUEST ONE

MISSION TWO: PSDNSXGZ0  
MISSION THREE: NS8NSDGZ4  
MISSION FOUR: 553NSXGZ0  
MISSION FIVE: 5369NSXGG  
MISSION SIX: DRBJOVD8H

## QUEST TWO

MISSION ONE: ZND39NSXF  
MISSION TWO: PXHNDXGZ8  
MISSION THREE: 3NRDZNSX1  
MISSION FOUR: SXHPPXNZD  
MISSION FIVE: VVN88JV83  
MISSION SIX: DVN888V8H

## QUEST THREE

MISSION ONE: 3R69NSXGG  
MISSION TWO: 8HNJHVD8H  
MISSION THREE: JHR0HVD8H  
MISSION FOUR: 5D55JNGZD  
MISSION FIVE: NGZ9X99XF  
MISSION SIX: DHRX80V83

## The Immortal

(ELECTRONIC ARTS FOR THE NES)



These codes for Levels 2 through 7 come in from Pedro Miller of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and Chris Edwards of Roanoke, Virginia. Thanks to both of you.

Level 2: SVYYX10006Y90

Level 3: 5SST121000X10

Level 4: TT85X731001X60

Level 5: 845YV41002X60

Level 6: 650V610005Y0

Level 7: YT7Y7710038Y0

Press start button or  
enter certificate:

yt7y7710038y0

0 1 2 3  
4 5 6 7  
8 9 r s  
t v x y  
del end

Press start button or  
enter certificate:

5sst121000x10

0 1 2 3  
4 5 6 7  
8 9 r s  
t v x y  
del end



START  
A

► START  
GAME OPTION

## Sagaia

(TAITO FOR THE GENESIS)



Here are two codes that Angel Ramirez of Briarwood, New York, sent in: To get to play data screen, during the title screen, press A, B, C, A, B, C, A, B, C. This will show you the route you took, how many continues and men you used, difficulty and your initials.

SPECIAL MODE

NO.	SCORE	ROUTE	CNT	RANK	STK	PLAYER
01	00000000	00	EASY	0	PROCC	
02	00000000	00	EASY	0	PROCC	
03	00000000	00	EASY	0	PROCC	
04	00000000	00	EASY	0	PROCC	
05	00000000	00	EASY	0	PROCC	
06	00000000	00	EASY	0	PROCC	
07	00000000	00	EASY	0	PROCC	
08	00000000	00	EASY	0	PROCC	
09	00000000	00	EASY	0	PROCC	
10	00000000	00	EASY	0	PROCC	

You can also get a much more difficult mode by pressing the C button 12 times during the title screen. When you see "Special Mode" appear on the screen, you know you've done it correctly. Thanks for the Easter eggs, Angel.



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If the giant tortoise boss turns his back on you, watch out. He's ready to fire volcanic rocks.

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# VIDEO GAMES REVIEWS

## The Little Mermaid

CAPCOM

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

First, the bad news: With only five levels of not-too-dissimilar action, Capcom's *The Little Mermaid* seems far too short, and it's doubtful that this cartridge could provide the experienced gamer with much more than an afternoon's pleasant diversion.

Ah, but there's a good reason why this game (based on the popular Disney feature) does not attempt to overwhelm the player with complex play mechanics or wild graphics. Capcom has already proven that they can take Disney characters and successfully integrate them into video games of intricate challenge (*Duck Tales*) and wacky intensity (*Chip 'n' Dale Rescue Rangers*). This time, they've come up with a game that's more likely to appeal to a different audience—a young, female audience.

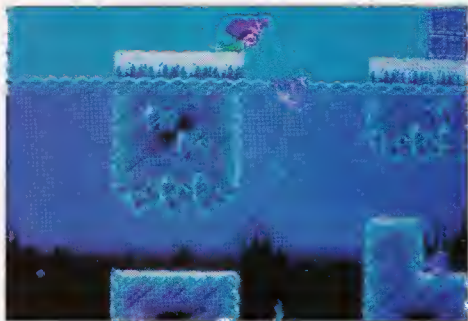
That's not to say that the aforementioned titles were made for boys, but it's been obvious for years that the video-game marketplace is predominantly male. There are a number of factors that have contributed to this unhealthy state, but the key is probably the fact that most video-game characters have been male, from the mustachioed Mario to the gun-wielding muscleheads and ninja warriors who populate the majority of NES titles. Can a ten-year-old girl really identify with Rambo?

Maybe so, but she'll probably enjoy the adventures of Ariel the mermaid a lot more. Unlike the daydreaming waif who made the film so charming, the game features a much more aggressive Ariel who makes her way through the perils of the sea in a conscious attempt to defeat the evil Ursula. With a swish of her tail, Ariel can capture certain sea creatures inside bubbles, which can then be used as weapons to fight off other enemies. Certain power-ups extend the range and strength of the bubbles, and there are also bonus items like snarfbatts and dinglehoppers

that add points to your score.

Though it's a bit disappointing that Ariel's friends Scuttle, Sebastian and Flounder appear only in the game's brief intermissions, Ariel herself looks just fine. With her long red hair swirling behind her, she swims and spins as gracefully as you'd expect a mermaid to do. There are some really nice graphic effects in certain areas, like the spots where Ariel can dig in the sand with her tail or the places where she leaps out of the water and flops around on land before diving back in with a splash.

Other parts of the game are notable for their background graphics—Levels 4 and 5 are surprisingly atmospheric for an 8-bit NES game, as is the "boss" battle at the end of the first level. And the final confrontation with the huge, buxom Ursula is wonderful—her grinning, purple-skinned



visage is as wicked here as it was in the movie.

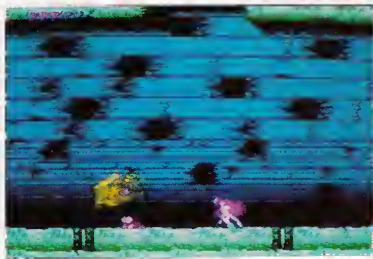
In case you're wondering, yes, the game does include an electronic rendition of the film's most memorable song, "Under the Sea." Of course, it's not quite the same without Sebastian's throaty Harry Belafonte-style vocals, but I believe that this is the first video game ever to include an Oscar-winning tune in its soundtrack. (Hey, that should count for something!)

*The Little Mermaid* proves itself to be a respectable entry in

Capcom's fascinating library of Disney-licensed titles. Kids will find it a treat, and video-game veterans may be surprised at







the way it evokes pleasant memories of earlier undersea contests like *Fathom*, *Dolphin* or *Sequest*.

—Chris Bieniek

Capcom U.S.A., Inc.  
3303 Scott Blvd.  
Santa Clara, CA 95054  
(408) 727-0400

## Tale Spin

NES

For the TurboGrafx-16 (\$61.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

For years, most people thought that the only video games featuring Disney characters would be created by Capcom for the NES. Now that Nintendo has loosened up the "exclusivity" clauses in their contracts with third-party developers, we can enjoy Mickey Mouse on a Genesis and Baloo the Bear and the *Tale Spin* gang on a TG-16.

Based on the popular animated TV show, *Tale Spin* spotlights the exploits of the adventurous pilot Baloo and his navigator Kit Cloudkicker. Together these furry fortune hunters travel all over the country in search of the missing pieces of a map that points the way to a fabulous treasure.

The *Tale Spin* cast features a lot of appealing characters: Baloo, in particular, has been a favorite of anyone who ever saw Disney's film version of *The Jungle Book*. Unfortunately, a lot of his charisma is derived from his booming voice, which is the only one of his characteristics that this video game does not reproduce. As a result, his personality shines through only on rare occasions—for example, when he's swept away under a waterfall and waves his arms in desperation as the current pulls him back.

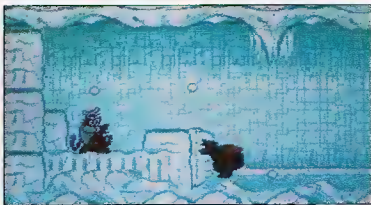
Of course, with the constant attacks Baloo is subjected to in the game, he's more pitiable than likable. There's always an army of bad guys in his face, and there are certain areas that are nearly impossible

**In creating *The Little Mermaid*, Capcom has designed a game geared toward a young, female audience.**

controls aren't much help—the "jump" button is noticeably unresponsive. Try setting the auto-fire switches on the next highest position—that way, you can be sure that the Turbo will register at least one press of the button.

The background music is not bad at all. It may be slightly repetitive, but it's not irritating—in fact, it's rather subdued. At times the tunes are so quiet that you may find yourself cranking up the volume just to get an earful. Of course, you'll mute it again when the sound effects start to grate on your nerves—the whistling noise of the coconuts Baloo tosses is particularly annoying.

Visually, *Tale Spin* reaches deep into the TurboGrafx's bag of visual tricks and comes up with a variety of results. Most of the main action features Baloo rambling through scrolling backgrounds; aside from the occasional multi-plane effect, there's nothing here that couldn't have been done on an NES. The crudely illustrated intermissions are also



**Visually, *Tale Spin* reaches deep into the TG-16's bag of graphic tricks and comes up with a variety of results.**

somewhat disappointing, as they don't seem to use a palette of more than 16 colors.

On the other hand, the scenarios that let you control the flight of Baloo's plane are outstanding. In a series of vertically



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scrolling bonus rounds, Kit "sky surfs" from the Sea Duck's tail and picks up points and power-ups. Later, there's a terrific sequence with a huge side view of the plane as you pilot it through an attacking squadron of old-fashioned pirate fighters.

If the rest of Baloo's adventures were as exciting, as challenging or as well-drawn as this airborne-combat stage, *Tale Spin* would earn a hearty thumbs-up vote from TG-16 owners everywhere. As is, it's not a failure, but the high points give you an unsettling feeling that the game could have been so much better. It's worth checking out, but definitely an acquired taste.

—C. 8.

NEC Technologies, Inc.  
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Wood Dale, IL 60191  
(708) 880-9500

## Star Control

ACCOLADE

For the Sega Genesis (\$69.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Twisting and turning in space, I was beckoned deeper into the star cluster and closer to the ever-strengthening enemy empire. As I followed the animated convolutions of the orbiting pathways, I saw that I had stumbled onto a celestial dead end. The Ur-Quan Dreadnought behind me would be on me in just another turn, and all I had was a maneuverable, but terribly vulnerable, Arilou ship. My hands sweated on the joystick, and I gave thanks that no matter how real and how exciting *Star Control* may feel, it is only a game. But what a game!

*Star Control* takes place in a science-fiction universe where the seven races within humanity's Alliance of Free Stars must do battle with the aggressive and all-around mean seven races of the Ur-Quan Hierarchy. Each race has distinctive spaceships that have their own maneuvering and firing capabilities plus special characteristics. Whether you play against the computer (taking either side) or choose to go against a human—well, alien-for-the-moment—buddy you will find the arcade sequences challenging, to say the least. Yet the challenge lies not so much in reflex control as in getting to know and use the strengths and weak-



**Star Control is perhaps one of the best-ever implementations of a strategic/tactical space-warfare game.**



nesses of all 14 ships and how they match up against each other.

In the game's practice mode, you'll spend quite a bit of time familiarizing yourself with how the ships handle. You'll learn that the Earth vessel (which shoots old, stockpiled ICBM missiles) should never close with a more powerful ship but should get as far away as possible to turn, fire and run.

You'll see that when the Mycon pod ship shoots its clouds of destruction that one defense is to dodge them as they gradually disperse into space dust. Soon you will know just when to have your Syreen ship (crewed by beautiful, albeit blue, humanoid females) sound its psychologically devastating call that can cause an enemy crew to mutiny.

After playing a bit in the practice mode, it's time to move on to the "melee" game. In the melee game all the ships on one side are sequentially matched against all the ships on the other side. The winner is the last side to still have a ship to call its own.

When you are ready to take on the universe, go for the "full" game. In the 15 scenarios of this mode you will experience what this reviewer considers to be one of the world's best-ever implementations of a strategic/tactical space-warfare game.

Each scenario takes you to a new star cluster, wherein you must explore stars to find certain ones to mine and others to colonize. You must also build forts and establish your starbase defenses long enough to build the ships you will need. You will have to visually track the way the stars rotate in various patterns. Each cluster will be composed of a number of star "spikes" or trails of moving stars. You will be able to move easily from star to star within a spike. But getting from one spike to another will mean finding the stars that are shared by more than one spike, which is not easy to do but adds a new dimension (literally!) to the game.

As you build your empire, you will have to fulfill various victory conditions in each scenario. Many times there will be battles between the various ships involved. If the player desires, he or she can play both the strategic game on the animated stargate as well as fight the arcade battles. If the player prefers, the game allows for the Genesis to control the strategy and the player just to run the battles. Or, the game will allow you to be the strategist and will captain your empire's ships for you in battle. The real fun and challenge is, of course, to take both parts yourself.



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It's true, this is not a perfect game for everyone. The sound effects are minimal, identical to what they are in the computer versions rather than taking advantage of the Genesis' wonderful sound potential. Fans of slash-and-hack jump-and-leap side-scrolling arcade games may find *Star Control's* look and feel to be too different from what they are used to in gaming.

But if you want to run a galactic empire with a depth of simulation that will have you believing that the stars are one big battlefield—*Star Control* will take you there.

—Neil Shapiro

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## Might & Magic II

ELECTRONIC ARTS

For the Sega Genesis (\$59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Fantasy role-playing games are known for being extremely fastidious. Apparently, there are those who enjoy engaging in the "realistic" and minute aspects of Dark Ages adventuring: purchasing weapons, learning skills,



hanging out at the pub to overhear rumors and getting some sleep at an inn to restore your character's energy. But, as with any video-game category, there's a fine line between realistically detailed games and boring ones. Traveling precariously along this border is *Might & Magic II*.

It should be noted that the review copy I received was a "preliminary version" to the fullest extent. There was no way I could create my own characters—a necessity in virtually all role-playing adventures—because this feature had yet to be programmed. Instead, a ready-made party of eight adventurers was provided. Graphics were also incomplete. Characters conversed through the dialogue

box even though they were not seen on the game screen, and some entrances/exits were "invisible" yet could be passed through—if you could find them.

Worst of all were the glitches, expected "hazards" in a prerelease. My party frequently got trapped within the forest and mountain areas as they were suddenly surrounded by these impassible environs. Despite all these problems, I got an accurate sense of what the final release version of *Might &*

*Magic II* will be like. So, consider this "review" like a tour of a new building still

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under construction.

Skimming through the 109-page manual (yes, 109 pages), you immediately sense the magnitude of *M&M II*. Like most role-playing fantasy titles, there's a detailed world history to put you in the mood. *M&M II* is set in the world of Cron, where once-powerful deities of the elements earth, air, wind and fire ruled until humans, monsters and magic appeared in the order of things.

After assembling a party of humans, elves, dwarves and such and selecting their individual class types (knights, sorcerers, ninjas, etc.), you begin your trek through the diverse world of Cron. There are quests you will be offered to undertake—from slaying the everyday dragon to recovering family heirlooms for a king.

Here's a sampling of the immensity of *M&M II*: There are five cities and five castles to visit—each with their own shops, facilities, multi-leveled caverns and dungeons to explore. There's also the land of Cron itself, and you can even go to the far ends to the realm of the elements. Cartographic skill and graph paper are musts. I haven't even touched upon the menu of spells and the catalog of weaponry, but trust me, they're big.



Unfortunately, those who are unaccustomed to this kind of gaming will likely find themselves bogged down in *M&M II*'s complexity and multitude of options and become, ultimately, frustrated. It takes a lot of work and patience to get your characters trained, armed and ready for adventuring—in addition to familiarizing yourself with the world of Cron—before any fighting occurs.

Speaking of which, the combat scenes are not like the arcade-type fights in *Sword of Vermilion* or the *Phantasy Star* series. To my taste, they're the kind of tiring number-crunching contests where a character's fate depends upon how high his or her status numbers are—strength, endurance, speed, etc. Other than a single animated enemy, little on-screen action occurs. Then there are the procedures that *M&M II* is a real stickler for. Weapons must be "equipped" before they can be used, for example. A more decipherable—and playable—combat interface similar to this is demonstrated in Sir-Tech's computer title *Wizardry: Bane of the Cosmic Forge*.

Ensuring that the characters in your party are healthy, get enough sleep, learn new skills and succeed as they face challenges is not unlike good parenting. Cynicism aside, *M&M II* is heavy on the work with little fun in the process. Even

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in the fantasy role-playing genre, there are now titles that are—dare I say it?—more fun than their predecessors and have edited out the duller aspects of “realism” while retaining more exciting points. *Might and Magic II* is reminiscent of the old days of early computer adventure gaming. It’s a relic among today’s role-players, polished up only in a minor way for the Genesis.

—Howard H. Wen

Electronic Arts  
1820 Gateway Drive  
San Mateo, CA 94404  
(415) 571-7171

## Blockout

ELECTRONIC ARTS

For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Who can forget *Tetris*, the diabolical game where you built levels from patterns of falling blocks? When you completed a row with no holes, it disappeared. Eventually, the column of blocks filled up, the game ended and you went back “just one more time” until two or three in the morning.

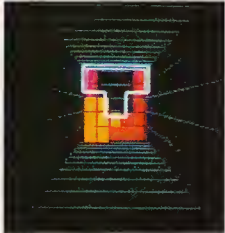
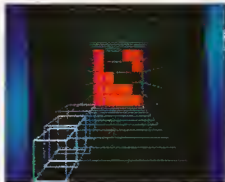
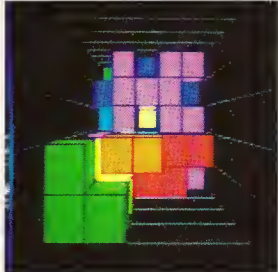
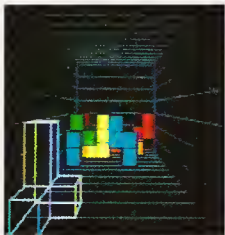
*Blockout*, the California Dreams computer game that has made its way to the arcade, takes the *Tetris* concept into three dimensions. The view of the playing field is from above, and the idea is to fill an empty rectangular column with the blocks that fall “into” the screen. If you manage to complete a level with no holes, then the level disappears, and everything above it drops down one level. Eventually, you can’t fill in all the holes in a level, and the levels build higher and higher (closer and closer to you) so that you have less time to position the falling blocks. When the stack reaches the “top,” the game is over.

While the blocks in *Tetris* are arranged strictly in two dimensions from four squares, two of the three sets of blocks in *Blockout* are arranged in three dimensions from up to five cubes. The three sets of blocks represent the three major levels of difficulty. The first set is called the “flat” set and is the easiest to use. It is constructed from no more than four cubes in two dimensions. When you have mastered the flat set, you can move on to the “basic” set. These are also arranged from four cubes, but now are in three dimensions—that is, some of the blocks are in a different plane than others. Finally, the “extended” block set can have up to five cubes in three dimensions. It takes a real spa-

tial genius to complete a level using these blocks.

The dimensions of the pit into which the cubes drop can also be varied to further influence the difficulty. The wider and higher the pit, the easier it is to place blocks. From a special screen you choose the block set, one of three defined pit setups or set custom pit dimensions. The ability to set up configurations makes this game endlessly challenging. If you master one layout, simply make a small change and try again. It’s amazing how much difference a single block-width change in the dimensions of the pit makes. You can even play against another player, keeping both pits visible on the screen at the same time. Whoever completes the selected number of levels first is the winner, although you automatically lose if you fill the pit with your blocks.

Playing *Blockout* takes a little getting used to. Each of the three buttons on the control pad rotate the groups of blocks in one of the dimensions, while the pad itself positions the block in the pit. When a block appears, it is shown in wire frame, so that you can see through it to the blocks below. Blocks that are already placed are solid and drawn in



**Gamers will find themselves “coming back for more” in this highly addictive game by Electronic Arts.**

bright colors, and each level is a different color. Lines on the walls of the pit are helpful in positioning the block, but are easy to ignore in the heat of the game. You’ll also need to get used to rotating the blocks around the right axis to get the piece to fit. If you are certain you have the blocks positioned right, you can press the **START** button to cause the block to fall quickly into position and gain more points. If you need it, there is also a practice mode where the blocks do not fall, so you can take all the time you need to position them and get used to controlling the rotation.

The graphics are a little fuzzy and do not begin to tax the abilities of the Genesis, while the soundtrack is a hard-driving rock beat that is very well-done but gets tiring after a while. The real draw in *Blockout* is not the so-so graphics or the decent sound, but, like *Tetris*, the excellent playability.

Overall, *Blockout* is well-crafted and very playable. You will find yourself coming back again and again attempting to better your last score. But be warned—if you thought



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Tetris was tough and addicting, wait until you try *Blockout*.

—David Plotkin

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## Rockin' Kats

ATLUS

Far for the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*Rockin' Kats*...there's a cool name for a video game. Think about it. What kind of imagery comes to mind when you hear a title like *Grenada*, *Gaias* or *Sagaia*? At least it's obvious that *Rockin' Kats* is not a flight simulator or a military-strategy contest.

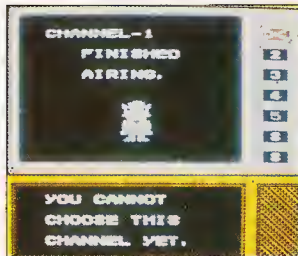
The game kicks off with a great idea. The screen shows you a TV set, and you can "change channels" to start at any of four different areas. There's also a shopping channel where you can buy power-ups and a "bonus channel" that lets you gamble for 1-Ups and more money.

Unfortunately, it's not long after choosing a channel that you'll discover what you may have feared all along: *Rockin' Kats* is another cartoon run-jump-and-punch game for the NES. Watch the background scroll by, beat the boss characters, rescue the helpless female—all the standard video game clichés are present and accounted for.

Not that the game is all bad. In fact, there's a lot to like about *Rockin' Kats*. The hero, Willy, is a colorful character, and the aforementioned level-select screen is a novel idea. The graphics and sounds are also adequate. The "Western channel," for example, includes tumbleweeds, cacti and whistling musical quotes from one of the most famous spaghetti Western soundtracks of all time: *The Good, The Bad & The Ugly*. But it's just not enough to make this one stand out from the crowd of *Super Mario* clones, and there are too many players who are starting to shy away from these contests because they believe that "if you play one, you've played them all."

Personally, I don't subscribe to that particular theory, but I will admit that it's getting a lot tougher to introduce people to this type of game.

The one thing that does lift *Rockin' Kats* above the level of the average "guy game" is the weird weapon Willy uses to dispatch his enemies. It's called a "punch gun," a hand-held pistol with a huge boxing glove that extends from the barrel when you pull the



**Even though *Rockin' Kats* is aimed at a younger crowd, it doesn't underestimate the gaming skills of that generation.**

trigger. It's mostly used for clobbering bad guys, but it can do a lot more than that. If you use it to punch an immovable object, the recoil sends Willy flying in the opposite direction, which is a neat way to wipe out opponents who are approaching from behind. Similarly, if you punch the ground, Willy jumps much higher than usual. The punch gun's giant fist can also catch certain objects and throw them at bad guys.

Most interesting of all, Willy can use this amazing weapon as a type of grappling hook that will let him swing from lamp posts, flagpoles and building ledges. Our feline friend is safe from his enemies' attacks as he spins around this way, and there are many places in the game where you will have to use this feature in order to fling Willy across a pitfall.

Though *Rockin' Kats* is definitely aimed at a younger crowd, it doesn't underestimate the gaming skills of a generation that's already jaded from years of playing *Super Mario Bros*.

Today's kids like a challenge. Remember, most of them have control-pad abilities that are much more advanced than those of the average adult, and *Rockin' Kats* has enough challenge and variety to keep a preteen busy for quite a while.

—C. B.

Atlus Software Inc.  
17145 Von Karman Ave., Suite 110  
Irvine, CA 92714  
(714) 263-0582

## Batman

SUNSOFT

Far for the Sega Genesis (\$49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*Batman is here! Batman is here!* Genesis owners are cheering. And why not? The Mega Drive game based upon that marketing juggernaut of 1989—better known as the *Batman* motion picture—was one of the most sought-after titles last year in the video-game importing business (the Japanese "gray" market). Yet, like the movie itself, *Batman* the Genesis game, after months of expectations, will probably evoke the same response in the end: Geez, what was all the big deal about?

There's an I've-played-something-like-this-before flair to *Batman*. Depending on your degree of video-gaming jadedness, this can be interpreted as either nostalgically familiar



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ERIC AM...

or run-of-the-mill boring. As expected, *Batman* is a scrolling side-view action kitsch game. The straightforward, linear game play is based on action sequences from the film, including the grand finale atop the Gotham City Cathedral, where you dance with the Nicholson-esque Joker in the pale moonlight for the final showdown.

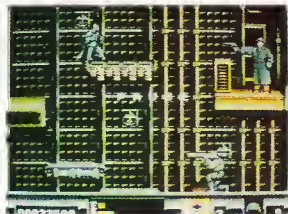
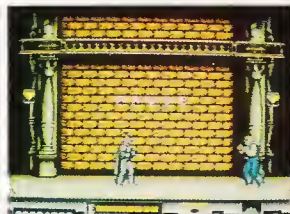
The game first pits Batman against minor thugs—a few shooting firearms—on the streets of Gotham. He can punch and kick them as well as jump and do a midair tumbling spin. Batarangs can be thrown, too, and more may be obtained by picking up Bat logos scattered throughout the game. A grappling-hook pulley allows Batman to climb up onto certain spots, and there are heart symbols to gather that restore his life energy.

After negotiating obstacles throughout the Axis Chemical factory and defeating bazooka men, Batman has to knock Jack Napier down into a vat of toxic waste that transforms the hood into the Joker. From there, it's onto the Flugelheim Museum to rescue Vicki Vale, dodging collapsing chandeliers and battling axe-throwing heavies along the way. Two end bosses challenge Batman here—a diligent swordsman and a big guy who throws his jam box and then his own body weight. The subsequent scenario is a race through city streets in the Batmobile, where fighting against various cars, vans, tanks and mobile missile launchers is not unlike dealing with the L.A.P.D. armored division.

Next, you go through an alleyway where back-flipping mimes lurk, some armed with flame-throwing lighters. Like their real-life counterparts, dealing with these pantomiming fiends is a nightmare. The end boss here is a machete-happy thug out to literally cut down the Caped Crusader. Then it's off into the skies in the Batwing to blow away the Joker's helicopter fleet and clown balloons filled with nerve gas.

The final trek through the Gotham Cathedral is an arduous mission with more gun-shooting enemies and an encore medley of all human end bosses from previous levels. The climb up into the cathedral tower requires skillful use of the grappling hook and Batman's jumping ability. Once you make it to the top, the Joker frantically fires his long-nozzled revolver at you and burns the floor with energy balls. Making him kiss the pavement merely requires several rapid shots of Batarangs—that's all.

The anachronistic Gothic look of the big



screen movie is faithfully re-created. The "cinema display" sequence shown upon completion of the Flugelheim Museum level nicely depicts a key scene in the film. Especially impressive are the mighty cool-looking Batmobile and Batwing, both of which look exactly like the toys kids' parents were buying two years ago.

There's nothing imaginative here—then again, most movie-licensed video games aren't. What's more, this Genesis game is a rather easy one to beat, even on the "hard" setting. If there's anything new to be said, it's that experiencing this residue of a fad from two summers ago ought to hold you over till that next big international event coming in summer 1992.

No, not the Olympics—*Batman* 2.

—H. H. W.

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## Hardball!

ACCOLADE

For the Sega Genesis (\$54.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

It took two years for a game company to release a baseball game for the Genesis to go head-to-head with Tommy Lasorda Baseball. That's astounding. Not a month goes by without some publisher heaping yet another baseball game onto Nintendo's pile: *RBI Baseball*, *ERA Baseball*, *Pete Rose's Bet-to-Win Baseball*, whatever, with only minor details distinguishing one from another. Perhaps nobody felt they could beat Tommy Lasorda at his own game (not before the liquid diet, anyway). Even NEC seemed to clone *TLB* for the TurboGrafx-16. Now along comes Ballistic to release Accolade's hit computer game *Hardball!* for the Genesis. The billion-buck question is, who plays a hotter game?

Let's go to the video tape. Both games have two leagues as well as East & West divisions, for a total of 26 teams. Neither uses authentic players, nor can you change stats. You can make substitutions and change players or positions. Equal footing there. *TLB*

uses a non-standard notation for stats, though, which is confusing at first but more informative overall.

Both games let you run a world series, but *Hardball!* won't let you play out the whole season. On the other hand, *Hardball!* allows you to play the series against a human opponent, while



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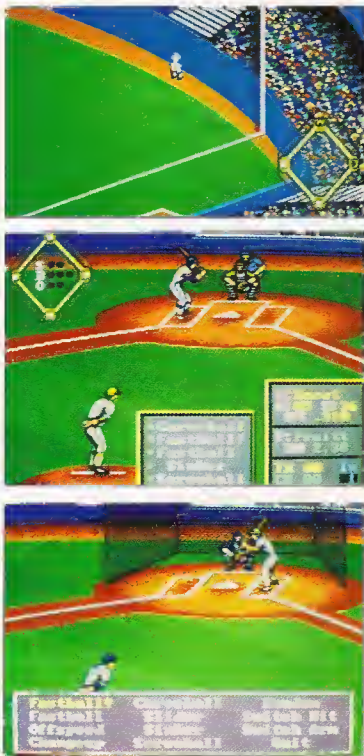
CIRCLE #121 ON READER SERVICE

TLB restricts the whole season and series to you against the computer (and you have to play the whole season first and finish appropriately placed in the rankings before you can play the series). In both cases, passwords allow you to save your season or series in progress.

*Hardball*'s ballistics seem more realistic. The angle of view is elevated to the right and above the pitcher (during batting) and scrolls during plays. The disadvantage of these views becomes apparent in side-by-side comparisons with *TLB*, where the view is either directly overhead or straightforward from the ump's view of home plate. As a batter, it's obviously a lot more realistic—not to mention accurate—to see the ball coming at you than it is to see it from a remote-angled vantage point. As a pitcher in *TLB*, you can see the base runners in small inset windows, and judge for yourself whether or not to try to pick off someone taking a hearty lead. In *Hardball*, a small diamond in the corner of the screen shows you which bases are occupied and how big a lead the runners are taking, which is neither as interesting nor as accurate.

In both games, fielding is the hardest element to control. In *TLB*, you're given that same small diamond in the corner, but it shows the positions of your fielders as well as base runners. A decent giveaway to compensate for the limitations of a TV screen. In *Hardball*—and this is where my biggest gripe lies—there is no way to see where your outfielders are. You must remember their positions in relation to the features of the park and hope one of them will wind up on-screen somewhere near the ball. It's haphazard, much more difficult and not a particularly enjoyable or fair way to challenge players.

The graphics are roughly equal, though *TLB* still takes the prize for realism in animation. *Hardball* has some nice touches, particularly in the interaction between the catcher and the pitcher (watch them carefully!). Digitized sounds are excellent, especially the calls, which are the crispest and clearest I've heard. But for some strange reason, runners aren't called safe, which leaves you wonder-



**Accolade's *Hardball* is only the second Genesis baseball game to be released in the past two years.**

ing for a few seconds how the computer saw the play. Strikes are called, but balls are not. Weird!

All in all, it was a very close game. But in this reporter's eyes, it's still Tommy 1, Challenging 0.

—Josh Mandel

Accolade  
550 S. Winchester Blvd., Suite 200  
San Jose, CA 95128  
(408) 985-1700

## Phantasy Star III

SEGA

For the Sega Genesis (NA)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Reviewing *Phantasy Star III* is a piece of cake! I'll just smile mysteriously and give a big thumbs up to all the *PSI* and *PSII* players, and they'll know exactly what I'm saying.

Fill space? Oh, okay. You'd probably like some details anyway.

*Phantasy Star III* is, as anticipated, more of the same, only better. Subtitled *Generations of Doom*, *PSIII* picks up 1,000 years after *PSII* and spans three generations of heroes. The land is again beset with bizarre creatures. One swoops down during your marriage ceremony and carries off Maia, your intended. As Rhys, you hack and slash your way around three planets, looking for Maia and enlisting the aid of other characters. You can add up to four characters to your party for a total of five, but that number fluctuates as characters turn against you, get desk jobs or whatever.

Eventually you'll rescue Maia, but here's the first twist: You must choose between marrying her or marrying one of the female members of your party. Depending on your choice, the game will change completely! In either case, you become a king, and the game skips ahead about 15 years. The planetary system is faced with a new threat. Now you're the son of Rhys and his wife, and you





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undertake a new adventure. Later on, you'll again have a choice of brides. You then assume the role of the new couple's child—thus you play out the roles of grandfather, father and son over a period of over 30 years. Truly an epic adventure.

As you play, you'll find the world has expanded to comprise seven "planets," two moons and countless dungeons. You'll confront Dark Force, the ultimate evil (familiar from earlier adventures). He takes up three-fourths of the screen and is so large you have to attack his claws separately! At the end of the game—there are four possible endings, depending on your marriage choices—you'll learn the heretofore unknown history of the Algol system.

Due to the four variations, the innumerable plot twists and assorted surprises, the game is truly replayable on a grand scale.



**Phantasy Star fanatics will be delighted with PSIII, as will anybody looking for a great role-playing game.**



Finishing a single game will probably take you at least 50-60 hours, so this is one cartridge guaranteed to give you your money's worth, even at its higher price. The battery backup saves only two games, so it'll take skillful management to avoid having to play each of the four possible adventures from scratch.

The graphics are slightly improved over those of *PSII*. In combat, your enemies—many of which are huge—are crudely animated against appropriate backgrounds (no more grids). Some backgrounds even feature multilevel scrolling. The dungeons no longer have the confusing grid overlaid on top, and none are more than two or three levels deep. Unfortunately, there's no first-person perspective like in *PSI* dungeons, which is a shame, since it was spectacularly smooth.

You have to love combat to love *PSIII*. As in earlier episodes, every few steps end in a battle sequence. The combat system is convenient, offering both computer-controlled and step-by-step strategies. But the computer never uses your "techniques" (magic spells), so if you want to use these abilities, you'll need to program combat piecemeal.

As in *PSI* and *PSII*, there's not enough variety in the music; in fact, there seems to be less music than in smaller Genesis games. Then again, it's hard to include 200 hours' worth of music in one little cart.

In summation, *Phantasy Star* fanatics will be delighted with *PSIII*, as will anybody in search of a great role-playing game. It's more

*continued on page 106*

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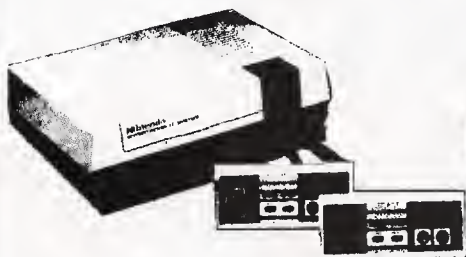
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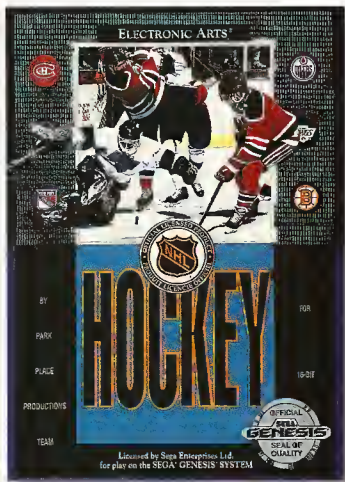
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**A**

s many of you know, I spent late February and March recuperating from a cataract operation (successful) on my right eye. Since my left eye is sightless due to a baseball injury, this meant about five weeks without playing games, getting on the computer or reading fanzines.

There's a stack of 'zines on my desk for review. Some fans are already talking about a fanzine glut. I agree that many fanzine editors might be hopper coediting or contributing, but I don't think there can be too many fanzines. Each publication is the soapbox for the fan who produces it, and diversity of opinion can help shake the electronic-gaming world out of its tendency toward conformity and copycatting.

That said, let's dig into that heap!

## The Subversive Sprite, Vol 2, #3

Lance Rice  
Rt. 1 Box 236-C  
Jasper, AL 35501  
\$1.25—Monthly

Ten pages

It may have hit a temporary plateau after a period of great improvement, but *The Subversive Sprite* remains one of the liveliest fanzines on the scene. Editor Lance "Wild" Rice presents a bushel of opinions on computer and video gaming in a personable, rambling style that's fun to read even when you disagree.

And you will disagree, at least occasionally. Even Lance doesn't always stay loyal to his previously published opinions. He can be infuriating when he discusses subjects about which he knows little, but he is a forthright and incisive critic of both games and professional publications. His magazine reviews are always the thing I look for first when a new issue arrives.

*The Subversive Sprite* has a feistiness that distinguishes it from all the other fanzines. Add some spice to your hobby and try a copy.

## WHAT IS FANDOM?

Electronic-gaming fandom is still fairly new, but hundreds of knowledgeable computer- and video game lovers are now editing, writing and reading the small-circulation hobbyist publications we call fanzines. Electronic-gaming fandom is an informal network of people who share a knowledgeable interest in interactive electronic entertainment. Fanzines are the amateur publications that these fans produce as forums for the exchange of views on all aspects of the topic.

Getting involved is as easy as sending for sample copies of some of the titles mentioned each month in *Fandango*. Most fanzines are available for a letter of comment on the previous issue, contribution of artwork or written material, trade for other fanzines or, of course, cash.



## FANZINES TODAY AND TOMORROW

by Arnie Katz

### MegaSports Wire #1

Jeffrey Michael Tschiltisch  
10201 Kerrigan St.  
Santee, CA 92071  
\$1—Occasional  
Eight pages

The age of specialization has dawned in electronic-gaming fandom! This exceptional newsletter is devoted solely to Genesis sports games. The cover feature, for example, is a comparison of *Lakers Vs. Celtics* and *Pat Riley Basketball*. Not that the editor is a company lackey; he takes a tough stand on Sega's Genesis advertising.

## ATTENTION FANZINE READERS

If you want to see sample copies of many of the top current fanzines—or if you're a fanzine publisher looking for names for a mailing list—**VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT** can help you. The *Fanzine Readers List* is available to any fanzine editor who sends a self-addressed stamped envelope. Anyone can be included on the list by simply writing and asking. In either case, here's the address: Arnie Katz, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107.

The second *Fanzine Readers List*, with over 100 active names, is currently available. A new one, with every name requalified, will be ready in early fall, so get those names to me as quickly as possible.

The all-too-brief "From the Editor" reveals that Jeff is 27, and his inaugural fanzine certainly reflects a mature and sophisticated outlook toward gaming. The same column mentions that Jeff owns other systems, including an IBM. I hope that he will eventually extend coverage to include sports games on other systems too.

### Video Plus #6

Henry C. Sterchi and Bob Poersche  
58 Perry St.  
Brentwood, NY 11717  
\$2.50—Bimonthly  
140 pages

The listed page count is no typographical error. This is a huge buyer's guide fanzine with dozens of reviews. Henry and Bob cover all brands of portable and console video game systems.

*Video Plus* shows that nothing can stop the dedicated fanzine editor. Henry and Bob didn't have access to a typewriter or word processor, so they produced this amazing compilation in neat and legible handwriting! This issue's editorial promises conventional typography in the next issue, but readers of *Video Plus* #6 will be glad these promising fans didn't wait for that to share their fanzine with us.

### Video Scope #2

Aaron Buckner  
9358 Cardinal Court  
Blue Ash, OH 45424  
\$1.25—No schedule stated  
Ten pages

*Ultra Zone*, a 15-year-old Aaron Buckner's first fanzine, gets a new name and a successful face-lift. *Video Scope* has a striking appearance that makes it especially easy to read, though the editor is still learning the mechanics of assembling a publication.

The cover centers on the NES, Game Boy, Lynx and Genesis, although articles like the one on variety in 16-bit cartridges and the "Letter From the Editor" column discuss the entire video-gaming field.

The 'zine's most unusual feature is that three critics review each game. Unfortunately, the panelists use pseudonyms. The comments would mean more if the tria wrote under their real names.

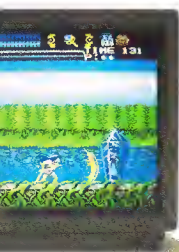
## MEGAGAMING

A sample copy of *Megagaming*, the bimonthly "Voice of Electronic Gaming," is available for \$1 from Arnie Katz, Bill Koebel and Joyce Worley (330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107). Each issue contains news, previews, fanzine critiques, a forum for two-oriented questions, columns and more.





# RENOVATION DOES WHAT



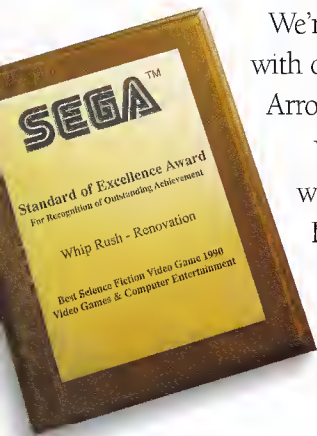
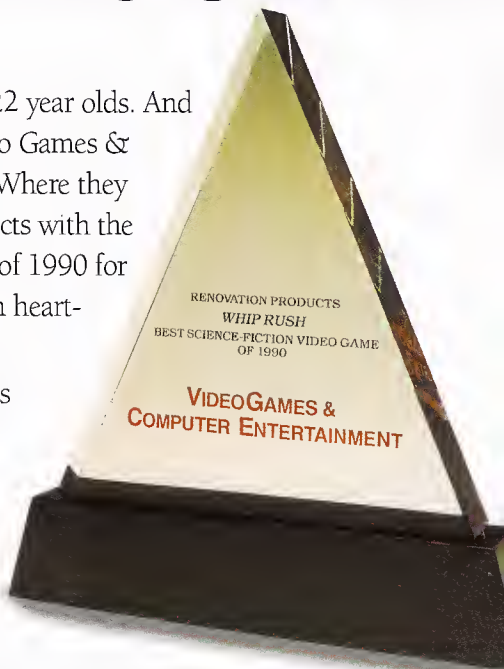
And seven year olds. And 22 year olds. And even the old-timers at Video Games & Computer Entertainment. Where they awarded Renovation Products with the Best Science-Fiction Video of 1990 for Whip Rush — one of seven heart-pounding titles currently released.

If that isn't enough, Whip Rush was awarded the "Standard of Excellence" award from SEGA.

Which goes to show, when you're a winner, you're bound to make some waves.

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You'll face a wild, imaginative assortment of fierce enemies in Gain Ground (*for two players*). Whip Rush, the award-winning sci-fi adventure game will blow you away! Arcus Odyssey (*soon to be released*), is a killer 8-meg role-playing action game. And with Dinoland (*another soon to be released game*), you can join Dinobunz and his friends on a wild, prehistoric adventure — pinball style!



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# G.I. Joe

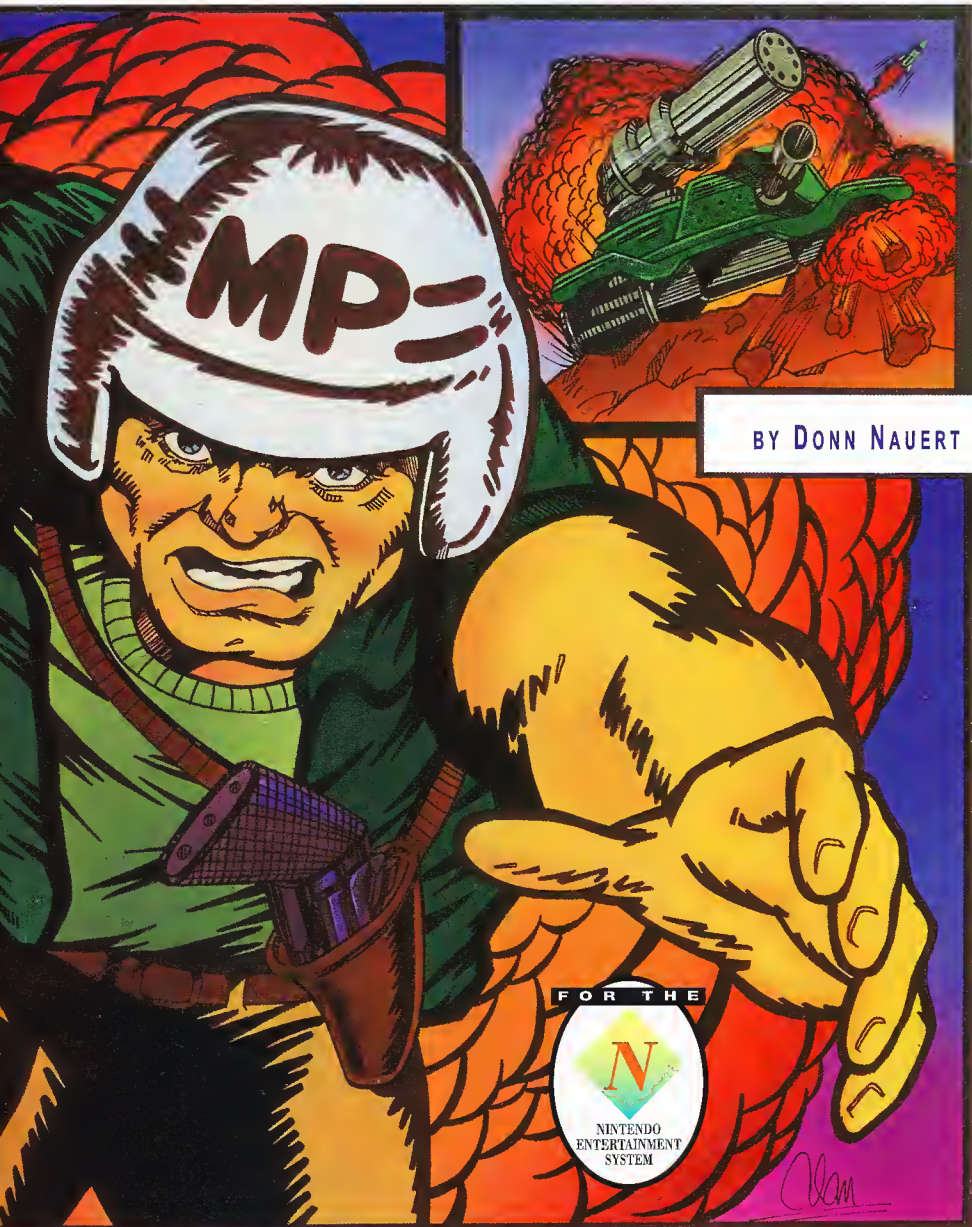
STRATEGY GUIDE

ILLUSTRATION BY ALAN HUNTER

**Part II**







BY DONN NAUERT

FOR THE



**T**

he Cobra organization is at it again—trying to take over the world has become the favorite pastime for this group of villains. Luckily, the G.I. Joe Team is on the ball and seems to stay one step ahead of Cobra and his gang of thugs.

Last month we took a look at Levels 1 through 3; this month we'll finish the game. Look in the *Easter Egg Hunt* section on page 32 for a complete rundown of codes for Quests 1 through 3. The only noticeable differences between the quests are that you can only choose two of the five characters in the second and third quests to enter each mission instead of the three you can choose in the first, and the checkpoints where you'll set the bombs in the second level of each mission are in a different location.

Enter along the wall on the left to get some helpful items, then fall down through the floor to get the Cobra Pogo.

From the start to the beginning of the rock cliffs, you'll have to deal with these guys. Take your time and wait for them to make the first move, then jump over them to the next level.

If you still have the Cobra Pogo when you reach the top, you can jump through the rock on the far right and take it with you as you battle the A.G.P.

Take your time and use the Pogo to your advantage by taking out the enemies from across the way.

## A.G.P.

### LEVEL 4-1 END BOSS

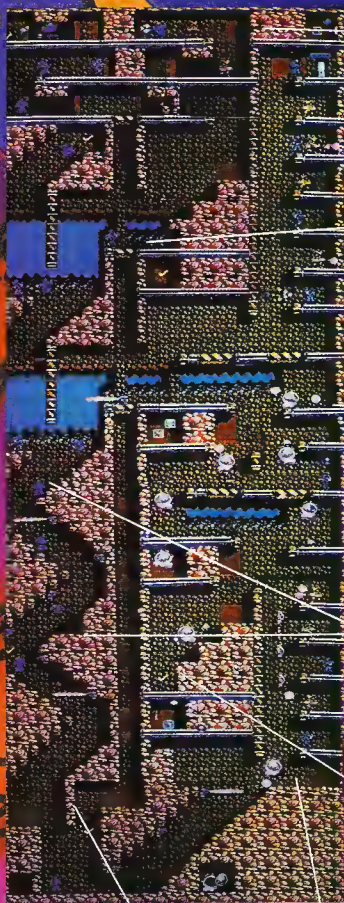


If you have made it to this point with the Cobra Pogo, you can defeat the A.G.P. fairly quickly. Your biggest obstacle will be the homing missile fired at you by the A.G.P. But battling it out on foot isn't that much more difficult—it just takes a little longer. As long as you dodge the homing missile and concentrate your fire power on the active A.G.P. (not the shadow), you'll be fine.

## Black Hills Base LEVEL 4-1



## LEVEL 4-2



Walk through the wall to get the weapon power-up and health.

Shoot away the rock to expose hidden items.

Since you start off below this checkpoint, you could make this your first stop, or since the exit is above you, this could be your last. Either way, you'll need to jump into the right side of the rock, cling to the wall, then go through the rock and onto the ledge.

At both these points in the staircase you can shoot away the rock and get extra power-up items.

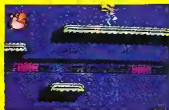
If you want the power-up items in the rock located here, you'll have to leave the Cobra Boar behind and go on foot the rest of the way.

In Quests 2 and 3 you'll need to fall down through the rock to find a checkpoint.

Falling through the rock on the far right side will lead you to a Cobra Boar.

## Road Pig

### LEVEL 4-2 END BOSS



Work your way up the conveyor belts to this point, and wait to see where Road Pig is going to throw the boulders.



If he throws the rock against the wall, wait until it bounces off, and as it reaches its highest peak after the ricochet, jump to the conveyor belt above. Try to stay on the right side of the conveyor belt so that when he throws the boulder straight down at you, you can move to the left side of the conveyor belt and jump to the one above.



Once you make it to the top conveyor belt, it's time to blast him with as many shots as you can—probably two—before you have to move back down to the conveyor belt below, which is where you'll want to wait for Road Pig's next move. The easiest way out of the fight is to have three fully powered players with full health. Then you can stay on the ledge and blast him. As one character gets low on health, switch to another, but be ready to pound Road Pig with at least 25 shots.

## Sahara Desert Base

### LEVEL 5-1

In this level most of the power-ups can be found hidden in the sand.



Be careful of the Cobra Interrogator at the top.

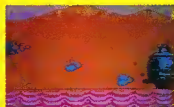
Once you have the Cobra Interrogator, there are two ways you can go through this level. You can go for all the power-ups and take your chances when you lose the Cobra Interrogator, or you can cut the corners as close as you can, avoiding all the power-ups and most of the enemies. You'll still have a chance of losing the Cobra Interrogator, but at least you'll be closer to the top.

You can shoot away the wall to expose the entrance to a Cobra Interrogator, but first you might want to use your grenades (or Snake Eyes' magic if you have him in the party) to shoot the bullets from these cannons. That way you can build up your health, ammo, weapon power and score.

This guy will jump out of the sand in a surprise attack—and as it turns out, he'll be your toughest opponent in the level.

## Cobra Bugg

### LEVEL 5-1 END BOSS



Cobra Bugg is split into three sections that you must defeat. The first is this gun position, which shouldn't be much of a problem.



Once the center section comes into play, you might want to switch to Rock&Roll (if you haven't already) to take out the guys on the scooters.

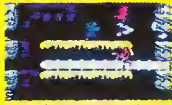


For the third section, the only serious problem you'll have comes from the grenade-thrower in back. Simply jump to avoid, and blast away at the gun position and the guy in back.

### LEVEL 4-3

## Voltar

### LEVEL 4-3 END BOSS



Voltar starts off at the bottom with you at the top. If you jump up in the air, this will cause Voltar to also jump up onto the next level.



Once Voltar is on the second level, move your character to the side that Voltar first lands on—in this case, to the right. Now jump so that Voltar will jump up to the top level and blast him. Once he reaches the end, Voltar will fall back down to the second level.



Move your character to the opposite side, and jump to bring Voltar back up. If the laser on the top lights up, quickly get down to the second level, you're about to get zapped.



In most cases, the easiest way to get rid of these laser-firing vipers is to punch your way out.

Fall down into the dune to escape the gunfire of the gunship. Using grenades, you can take out all three guns. Try to position yourself to the right of the entrance, just out of reach of the shots, but somewhere you can still lob the grenades.

You'll run into a whole mess of them near the end.



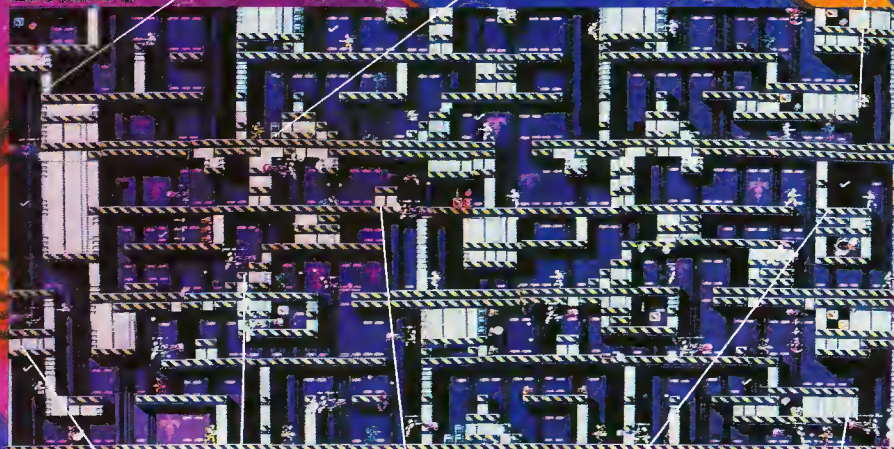
You'll know that you've reached the end when you see level ground.

After you go through this section, go to the top of the shaft. This is where you'll need to go to get to the rest of the game.

In this level there are a lot of places where you can walk through the walls. Whenever you see these blocks, shoot to open a spot where you can find hidden power-ups.

As you know, since you've made it this far, you can either enter from the bottom or the sides to get to the power-ups. In this case go through the right side.

## LEVEL 5-2



After you place the bomb at the checkpoint, jump back up to get the Cobra Interrogator.

You can fall and jump through this space in the girder. If you get to the checkpoint at the left last, you can use it as a shortcut to the exit.

After you place the bomb, fall through the floor to get to the Cobra Boar.

Enter through the right side to get the power-ups.

If you get to this checkpoint last, you can set your character on the raised girder on the level below, and by getting on the left edge (while facing to the left) throw grenades in the air to destroy the

bullets from the wall-mounted guns. If you know this level well and can get through it quickly, you can have about 400 to 450 ticks left on the clock to get extra ammo and other power-ups. On

the average, you'll probably get about 800 extra bullets. When the clock gets to 30 or so, start for the exit. Be sure to use the shortcut to the right.

## Golubulus

### LEVEL 5-2 END BOSS



It really doesn't matter which side you start working your way up on, but for the most part it will need to be in an "S" motion for you to make it to the top. Once there you can set your character on a perch, like the one shown in the picture. It's just a matter of repeated jumping and firing when you're on the perch. Another option is to leave a block in the same position that the white one in the bottom left-hand corner is in. Then you can stand and fire without fear of being hit by Golubulus' shots.

### LEVEL 5-3



By following the map, you can see that there are some areas where it would be best to stay up and others where you want to stay down when choosing a path to follow. In this level you don't have much time to waste so you have to move quickly, but at the same time the best way to get through the level is to slowly inch through the enemies on the screen so that only half of them are showing, then blast them.

Again, unless you have to get these power-ups, stay on the lower part of the level.

## General Hints

There are only three helpful tips that will be of any real use:

- When one of your team members is about to die, switch to another team member. Don't let a team member die if you can help it. If you do, his weapon-power level will go down.
- Try to get all your characters' weapon-power level to the maximum. When the character you're using is at the maximum and you come to another power-up, switch to a lower-level character to build his power up. Running around with all five characters at their peak will obviously make the game a little easier.
- Check every inch of each section. There's no telling when you'll find a secret passage that will lead to a Cobra Pogo, Cobra Interrogator or a Cobra Buzz Boar.



## Cobra Commander

If you have General Hawk, you can hover at about the same position in the photo and blast Cobra Commander. The only thing you have to worry about is the ray that the eye behind you shoots. However, if you don't have the services of General Hawk for the last battle, you'll have to have someone that can jump and has some decent fire power—Duke

and Rock&Roll are good backups. Then it's just a matter of staying in the left-center of the screen while you jump from platform to platform. Your best chance for a shot at Cobra Commander will come when you're on a large platform. Once you defeat him, you'll get a special message and a password for the next quest.

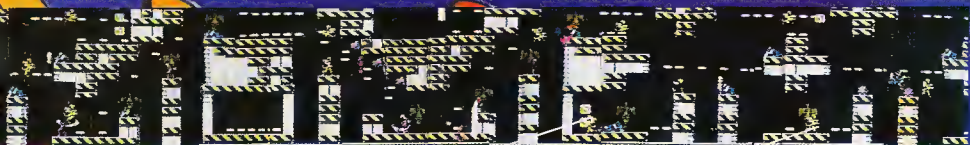
## Cobra Command Headquarters

### LEVEL 6-1



Go ahead and get the Cobra Pogo located here. It never hurts to have a little extra protection.



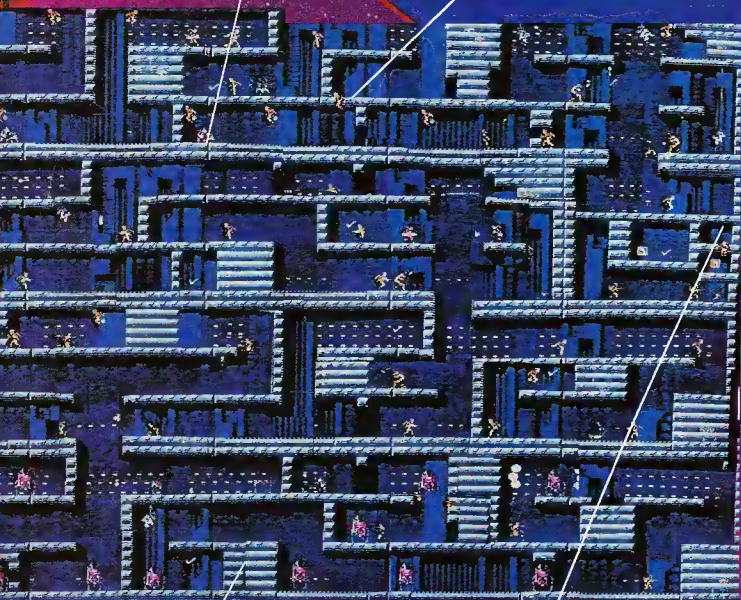


You can find a K-ration hidden in the structure. Enter it from below.

Be careful of this guy streaking through the air at the end.

Use General Hawk's flight pack to your advantage and stay on the top of the corridor. When you get to the other side of the enemy, fall and destroy.

If you really have to go into the top right-hand corner to get all the items, go ahead. Otherwise, use the hole in the girder (located to the left) to get easier access to the checkpoint.



If you do get it, you won't be able to get the power-ups hidden in the wall or the checkpoint that's hidden there in the later quest.

To start the level off on a good note, shoot down through the floor on the right to reach the checkpoint below.

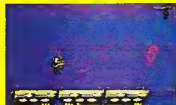
## Destro LEVEL 5-3 END BOSS



Destro will get into his vehicle and fly back and forth at the top of the screen. Note which direction he's facing, and when he comes down to shoot at you, move behind him and let him have it.



Once you've destroyed the vehicle, you'll have to face Destro one on one. You've got three things working against you here. Destro is firing laser waves at you, and you have to stay on the pillars and keep from falling. To make matters worse, the screen is scrolling to the right, forcing you to jump, avoid and move all at the same time. Obviously, timing is critical.



Even when Destro isn't on the screen, you still have to be ready to jump as he fires at you from off the screen.

In recent months there's been a lot of discussion concerning the violent nature of most video games. The arguments for and against this trend are many and varied, and, as always, both sides have a point, and both sides miss the point. Personally, I'm not against violence in video games, just as I'm not against violence in the movies...to a degree. Unfortunately, we live in a violent world, and our entertainment reflects that. The only trouble I have is when the violence is glorified, when force is used not as the last resort, but as the *first*. Call me strange, but watching some guy machine-gun down a hundred flunkies who just happen to be working for some baddie doesn't really impress me.

In most video games there's usually a justification, however flimsy, for the extreme action depicted. The most common one, and one that I've moaned and groaned about many times before, is that someone (usually a woman) important to the hero has been kidnapped, and the hero must penetrate a fortress to rescue the kidnapes.

I guess the most tiresome aspect is how utterly unrealistic these games are. Our hero can usually mow down dozens of enemies in seconds, often using only his hands and feet. Personally, I find few but more challenging opponents more interesting and believable.

## Kung Fu Master

Irem America for the Game Boy

Fortunately, your mission in this game is not to rescue some damsel in distress. Rather, it is to reach and penetrate the factory of



by  
Maurice Molyneaux



*Kung Fu Master, by Irem, will match the gamer against a multitude of enemies on a scrolling playfield.*

the villainous Daddy Long Legs, where—now don't groan—a "lethal concoction of Scorpion Juice and Petroleum was being manufactured with evil intent." (Just what does one do with such a concoction? Bottle it as a soft drink?) You, the kung fu master, must reach Daddy Long Legs and put an end to his twisted plans. Your name? Leap. Bruce Leap.

Okay, you can groan now.

Silly story aside, *Kung Fu Master* is another in the long line of games that pit you, punching, kicking and jumping, against hordes of enemies in a scrolling playfield. You fight your way through the opposition, completing each section and defeating the bodyguard (a level "boss" by any other name) of that section. You, as Mr. Leap, can punch and kick, duck and execute leaps and flips to avoid and attack enemies. You'll encounter kung phooeys, chain whippers, Chainsaw Freddy, Pugsly Ugsly, Abdul and others with cute names. On the way you'll fight your way through town and the crates of a port, on top of a speeding train and into the factory itself.

The "henchman" baddies are all pretty easily dispatched. The "boss" is the real challenge. I'm afraid this kind of thing is starting to wear thin, because I find it frustrating that I have to waste all kinds of time just trying to get to the real challenge. The henchmen are just sort of "busy work" to give you something to do between bosses.

The graphics on *Kung Fu Master* are about as average as they can be for the Game Boy. They are clear enough but not really substantially stunning to be impressive. The sound is also about average. As for game play, the controls are simple enough, though mastering the flips isn't quite that easy. My only really major gripe with *Kung Fu Master* is that I was able to get about halfway through the game within the first hour that I played it, which indicated that this would be one Game Pak that I could finish a little too easily for my own individual taste and capabilities.



## Ninja Gaiden

Atari for the Lynx

The arcade favorite *Ninja Gaiden* is now on the Lynx. The Atari translation of this game appears to be fairly accurate, though I was never much of a player of the arcade version and couldn't spot all the differences that I suspect must be there.

In the game, you are attempting to become a *Ninja Gaiden*, and the last step in your training is to complete a dangerous quest. You must vanquish the evildoers who have captured the sacred Silent City and

turned it into a filthy den of corruption. The action is presented on a horizontally scrolling playfield that goes from left to right. You

must fight off seven types of enemy to succeed, including the numerous masked ninjas, the troublesome lumber ninjas (who look like hairy sumo wrestlers swinging logs!), etc. Your eventual goal is to reach the Silent City's palace and confront the mighty Dark Lord—a large, sabre-armed behemoth.

The graphics in *Ninja Gaiden* are surprisingly good, particularly considering how small they are. Your character moves with surprisingly smooth motion and, of equal importance, moves like a human being, not some weird robot (as many video-game characters do). Control is fairly simple, though it takes a few games to get the hang of some actions, such as using A to leap over an enemy and while in midair using B to flip him, or using A to leap and then trying to press Option 1 to grab an overhead bar.

My only gripe with this game is that you can't proceed until

you've eliminated all the enemies near you. That would not be so bad, except that the screen scrolls only in one direction, with the result that sometimes you get stuck in a teeny corner of the screen trying to fight off three or more enemies with absolutely no room to maneuver.

Oh, well, who said being a ninja was easy?

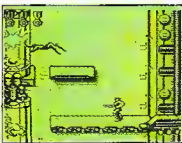
## Operation C

Ultra for the Game Boy

As a reviewer, I frequently receive many games from the software manufacturers that are incomplete or as industry people say, "a beta version." Since that is often the case, the game usually doesn't arrive with a manual or instructions. With *Operation C* that's exactly

what happened. I was pretty much in the dark as to how to play the game and had no real clue about what the game's objectives are. In a way, it made playing the game a sort of "trial-and-error" adventure.

That said, let me say that I like *Operation C*. It's one of those Rambo-type games where a single figure races through a seemingly ever-scrolling complex, blasting everything in sight. Simple, one-dimensional, yes. Fun to play, yes. The graphics are good, detailed without being overdone. The sound is above average too. Your on-screen alter-ego is easy to control and hard to kill. Once you get the hang of aiming his weapon,



*Operation C* is a Rambo-type game where a single figure races through a complex, blasting everything in sight.

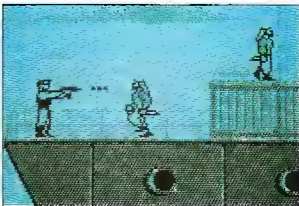
jumping and picking up "power-ups," you can play the game.

I still don't know just what "Operation C" is, or where playing it will eventually lead my character, but I don't really care. It's a good game. It's fast-paced, with enough action to hold my interest.

## Navy Seals

Ocean for the Game Boy

Based on last year's motion picture of the same name, *Navy Seals* consists of five levels, each a progression of the "plot," namely that of the Seals' discovery of a cache of stolen "Stinger" missiles and their attempts to find and destroy them. In the first level of the game, your goal is locate the terrorist hideout somewhere in the harbor district. The second level involves storming the hideout and rescuing a helicopter crew that the terrorists are holding captive. In Level 3 you have to kill the terrorists as you make your way through a ship that will carry the Stinger missiles to their eventual



Based on the motion picture, *Navy Seals* consists of five levels, each a progression of the "plot."

destination. In Level 4 you discover that the ship was a decoy, and you must return to the city and find an informant (a reluctant one). Finally, in Level 5 you must penetrate the terrorist base and destroy the missiles.

Your weapons consist of guns; either a handgun or (if the correct items are picked up) a machine gun. Your Seal can jump, duck and walk. He can shoot when standing or ducking, but not when jumping (why?). Your opponents

are terrorists. Contact with any of them is instantly fatal. In really tough spots you can call on a Seal sniper, who quickly snuffs out all opponents on the screen. You can only call the Sniper twice per level, and you'll get a bonus if you don't use him.

The graphics in this game range from excellent (the title and intermission screens) to mediocre (the game screens). The characters are clear and easy to see, but the animation is minimal, making the game somewhat static-looking. Like the other games reviewed this month, it is also a horizontally scrolling contest.

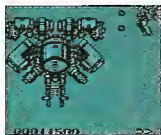
I can't say I loved *Navy Seals*, but it was an interesting enough playing experience. If you enjoy games of this type, you may want to check this one out. The one thing I did appreciate about the game was that it attempts to follow something of a plot. Simple as it is, it's a nice touch that helps make the game feel a wee bit more "real."

## Battle Unit Zeoth

Jaleco for the Game Boy

Ten years ago metallic outer space aliens called greins attempted to invade the Earth. The invasion was repelled, but, unknown to humankind, the aliens secretly set about constructing an underground base from which to renew their attack. Naturally, the people of Earth find this undesirable, so guess who has been chosen to pilot Battle Unit Zeoth, "the latest in anti-alien technology"? Yup, you.

Your mission is to guide your robotic fighter through five different scenarios (stages), avoiding and fighting off the invaders in a quest to destroy all of the "big commander" greins (yet more "bosses"). Your robot fighter can fly using his jet pack,



*Battle Unit Zeoth suffers from the complexity of its controls, making it awkward and difficult in piloting the fighter ship.*

as well as walk on the ground. Your primary weapon is a rapid fire "Volcan." When you destroy item containers one of five items will appear, and if you pick those items up, the destructive or defensive potential of your fighter will increase. The game ends when your "hyper shield" collapses, and your fighter is destroyed.

*Battle Unit Zeoth* is a fairly mediocre Game Boy title with simple objectives, simple graphics and simple sound. The only thing I found surprisingly unsimplified were the controls, which are a bit awkward. I found it frustratingly difficult to get the hang of piloting my fighter and constantly blew myself up. Fortunately, there's a continue option so you don't have to start from square one each and every time. Unfortunately, this game just didn't "do it" for me. The video images just weren't detailed enough, the action wasn't interesting enough and the controls were a bit annoying.

## The Punisher — The Ultimate Payback

LJN for the Game Boy

The Punisher is one comic book character that you would think would make for one really slam-bang software title. Heck, his name alone says just about everything you need to know about him. He punishes evildoers, plain and simple. Your goal in the game is to "punish," which means "snuff out," the pushers and dealers who work for the drug lord Jigsaw, your eventual target. In your quest to punish the guilty and protect the innocent, you'll fight your way through shopping malls, marinas, airports, South American jungles and, finally, Jigsaw's underground base.

Your primary weaponry consists of a machine gun, although you can also throw grenades and fire a rocket launcher. When you "pun-

ish" some enemies, they leave behind supply icons that, if shown, add to your inventory. The most commonly useful items are machine gun rate-of-fire upgrades and ammo clips, but you can also gather grenades, rockets and bullet-resistant (there's no such thing as bullet-proof) Kevlar vests.



*LJN's The Punisher—The Ultimate Payback is a pseudo-first-person perspective game reminiscent of an old fashioned shooting gallery.*

Perhaps the most surprising thing about *The Punisher* game for the Game Boy is that the title character doesn't really appear in the game! The game is pseudo-first-person, as seen from the point of view of the title character as the view scrolls from left to right across the setting. This gives the game something of an old-fashioned shooting-gallery feel. One nice difference between this game and such a gallery is that *The Punisher* has limited ammunition and must be careful to shoot only the bad guys and avoid hitting innocent bystanders.

My only real problem with this game is that it's sometimes difficult to position your crosshair on targets in front of dark backgrounds; it's too easy to "lose" track of them. Other than that small problem, *The Punisher* is actually a fairly good game. Give it a look.

Gotta go! So many games, so little time!



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W

ith our recent trip to Japan, we had the opportunity to see what was coming up for the Super Famicom (SF)—and probably the Super NES too. Nintendo took part in a Family Sports Land '91, which also included the Table Tennis Championships, among other things. Nintendo gathered its licensees to display upcoming SF and Famicom titles. What follows are the five most-recent titles we brought home and a listing of a few other unreleased SF titles that were viewed at the Family Sports Land.

## Ultraman Bandai

The box notes that he is "Japan's most famous hero." Some will recall the imported cartoons, which are still showing in Japan to a large following. And he still wears the space suit of a '50s super hero.

In this game, which was also seen in Japanese arcades, Ultraman fights a series of evil creatures bent on destroying the Earth. Using punches, kicks and special weapons, Ultraman must overcome the intense onslaught and save the planet. The game, as we have played it, to date is somewhat blah, but we've only taken on the earliest levels, and it may pick up as you get closer to the end stages.



In Bandai's *Ultraman*, which is based on Japan's most famous hero, the gamer must save the Earth from an army of evil aliens.



# UNDER THE HOOD of the SUPER FAMICOM

P A 3 R T

BY  
ANDY EDDY

## Augusta Golf T & E Soft

Of the fewer than a dozen cartridges for the Super Famicom, this is the second golf game. Unfortunately, *Hole in One Golf*, the first title, has an edge on *Augusta Golf*. That isn't to say that *Augusta Golf* is a bad game—heck, it's licensed by the Augusta National Golf Club, the location of the actual Masters Golf Tourney—it's just that it doesn't offer the same level of playability as *Hole in One* does.

*Augusta Golf*'s strong point is variety. It offers different courses, a nice tournament format that adds a good competitive feel to



it and a grid of the green that makes putting a little easier—even a tea break. It is also battery-backed to let you save scores from one session to the next. Sadly, it finishes second in a field of two, because it doesn't offer the fluid animation of *Hole in One*.

## SimCity Nintendo

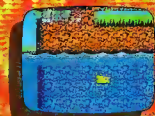
Will Wright and Maxis have created one of the most innovative computer games, and it has now crossed over to the Super Famicom. (An NES version has been in the works for a while and may be out by the time you read this.) This version differs from the computer version in several ways: it adds a

T & E Soft's *Augusta Golf* is the second golf title to be released in Japan for the Super Famicom.





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character to give you progress reports; offers you different "locations" to place on your map (like a zoo) when your town hits certain levels; and has a background soundtrack—can you name a video game that doesn't have constant music?—and even a chance to place your own house in the city.



**SimCity**, one of the most innovative computer games, is now available for the Super Famicom.

The end result isn't as graphically polished as the Macintosh version of *SimCity*, for example, but it makes for a very playable and enjoyable contest for those who are tired of the endless scroll/boss games. It's also battery-backed, so you can save two locations for ongoing construction.



Originally available as a coin-op, **Big Run**, by Jaleco, is a multisegmented road-rally type game.



**Taito's Darius Twin**, reminiscent of **Thunder Force II** (for the Genesis), is a scrolling shooter that is sure to "numb your fingers."

## Big Run

Jaleco

The Paris-to-Dakar Road Rally has been the subject of many computer driving games, and recently Jaleco brought it to the arcade. Now this wild driving adventure has come to the SF.

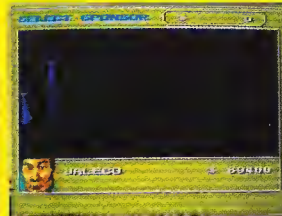
The object of *Big Run* is to complete the various segments from France to Africa, all the while keeping your car in good shape by buying parts and repairing your vehicle at various junctures, as well as driving carefully to minimize damage. The animation isn't that hot, but it's a quantum leap from *Pole Position*, one of the first behind-the-car-perspective driving contests.

## Darius Twin

Taito

Here's a familiar name for video gamers, and a scrolling shooter on the SF that will numb your fingers. It features wild background music and good sound effects, variable settings from the option screen and an overall tough challenge for all gamers. It also has some wonderful graphics, though at a couple of places in the game you'll see some minor flickering and missing sprites.

Overall, *Darius Twin* is a good game that is similar to *Thunder Force II* (for the Genesis) and *Sinistrion* (for the TurboGrafx-16). It takes you through various levels in mixed horizontal and vertical scrolling. You'll wonder where the next attack will come from.



## Previews

We also saw early demos, videotaped segments and preliminary pictures of games like *Dungeon Master* (licensed by Victor Musical from FTL's highly successful American computer game), *Area 88* (U.N. Squadron for the SF by Capcom), *Final Fantasy IV* (Square), *Ghouls 'n' Ghosts* (Capcom), *Super R-Type* (Irem), *Gundam F91* (Bandai), *Zelda III* (Nintendo), as well as baseball games from Culture Brain and Jaleco. There are lots of SF games on the way, many of which would be easy to convert for sale in the U.S. market.

In the next issue, we plan to look at what Super NES products were shown at the Summer Consumer Electronics Show in June, where the SNES debuted. 📺



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# THE QUEST FOR POWER:

A P L A Y E R ' S G U I D E T O

# POWERMONGER

A couple of years ago, a game from England called *Populous* brought the gaming world to attention. Few computer gamers could resist its unusual player interface and eccentric scenario. In *Populous*, you play a god and can cause earthquakes and floods and all sorts of neat disasters. You use these disasters as well as miracles to control a world's population.)

Now Bullfrog, the designers of *Populous*, have taken their unique view of gaming a step further, creating a war game that, while more down to earth than *Populous*, features a gaming world so realistic it's almost spooky. If you have an IBM-PC compatible, an Amiga or an Atari ST, rush

down to your nearest software dealer, and pick up a copy of *PowerMonger*. You won't regret it.

When you get back from the software shop, join us on the short tour of *PowerMonger* that follows, wherein we'll look at some helpful strategies for hopeful captains. (If you don't have *PowerMonger*, read along anyway.) Of course, no short

photo essay can tell you everything you need to know in order to play *PowerMonger* successfully. If you want to be a top-ranked captain, be sure to pick up your copy of *Master Populous &*

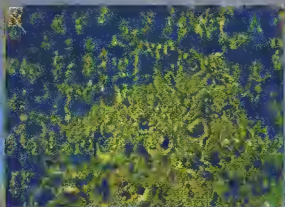
*PowerMonger*, published by Sams and written by yours truly, available soon in better bookstores everywhere.

BY CLAYTON WALNUM

ILLUSTRATION BY MIKE CRESSY







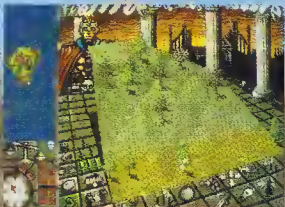
When you first start *PowerMonger*, you can access only one territory, all the way up in the northeast corner of the map-selection chart.



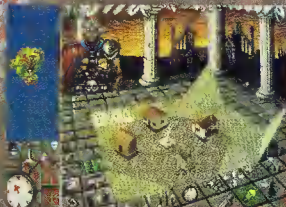
The game begins with your men camped around your home tower.



In this first territory, it's easy to take over all the towns. There are only two.



All inventions, except pots, require resources, usually wood. Wood is obtained by cutting down trees.



In this photo, you can see newly invented bows hanging on the workshop's side wall.



If, however, the conquest balance wasn't fully tipped in your favor, you'll be greeted by this gory scene.

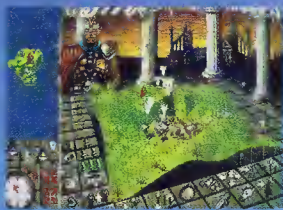


After you win a territory, it is marked with a sword, after which you can select any adjacent territory as your next target.



In the first territory, you have only small towns to fight. In the more advanced territories, large towns with many protectors must be defeated.





As you fight for control, the spirits of the dead rise up to heaven.



In order to keep your troops happy, they must have food. Sheep are one of your main food sources.



You also need to improve your weapons. To do this, you must invent weapons in a workshop, the three-sided building marked with a red flag.



When the conquest balance (the scales shown just above the compass) is tilted fully to the right, you control the territory and may choose to retire.



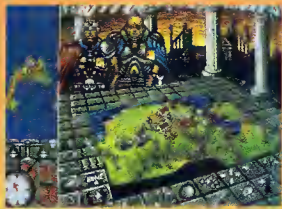
When you retire, if you control two-thirds of the territory's population, you'll see this screen.



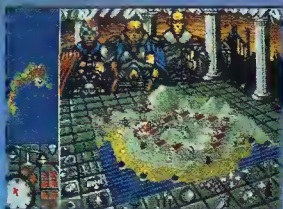
To defeat large towns, you need better weapons. In this workshop, a catapult, which is a devastating weapon, has been invented.



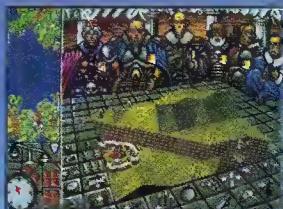
When you use a catapult, you'll see scores of souls flying up to heaven.



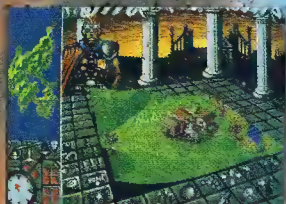
If you attack a town while you have a passive posture, you may be able to add its captain to your troops.



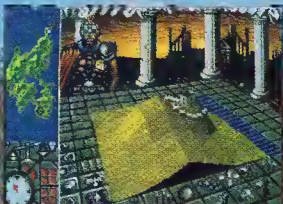
You can keep adding captains, one by one, until...



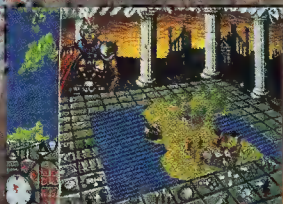
...you've got all six.



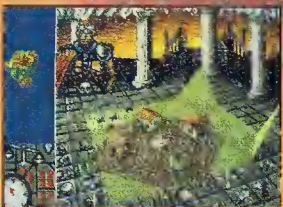
The overview map in the objects mode shows trees in red, towns and roads in brown, workshops in yellow and your people in white. This is a good mode to use when inventing weapons.



In the food mode, the overview map shows areas with a lot of food in white and areas with little food in gray or black.



Sometimes you need to keep your men (white) from attacking the enemy (in this case, red). You can usually do this by adopting a passive posture and then sending your troops away from the enemy's location.



Weather affects the speed at which food is made, as well as the speed at which your troops can move. Snow storms are the worst!



If you get desperate for supplies, you can try to forge an alliance with one of your enemies. You might get a rude answer like the one shown here, or...

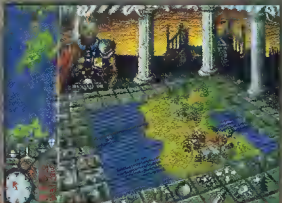




By using the four map icons above the overview map (in the upper-left corner of the screen), you can change the viewing mode of the overview map. This photo shows the contour mode, which helps you find high-altitude areas in which you can start mines.



This is the overview map in settlements mode, showing all settlements and roads in gray.



Sometimes your troops will insist on fighting, even when you tell them not to.



In order to cross water, your troops need boats. Sometimes boats can be found by the shore or lying in fields where enemy troops were defeated.



You can also get boats by inventing them in a workshop.



...you may get a new friend. Sometimes trading with a town first will increase your chances of forming an alliance.



Once you forge an alliance, be careful of what you attack. Your alliance is fragile at best.



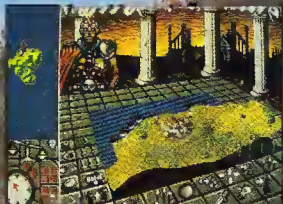
By activating the query icon, you can click objects on the close-up map in order to display information boxes. Clicking on a tree, for example, will give you a box like the one shown here, while...



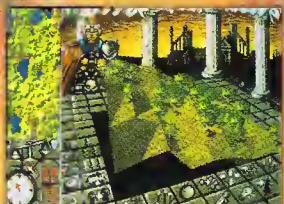
...clicking on a building in a town will give you an information box like this one. Every person and place in *PowerMonger* has a name, and, in the case of people, an entire history.



When you want to know where the enemy troops are, click on the information box's eye icon, and the close-up map will center itself around the subject of the information box.



When you want to see a lot of territory at once, you can use the compass to zoom back to a distant view.



Because of hills, valleys and other obstructions, you can't always see what you want to see on the close-up map. When this happens...



...use the rotation arrows to turn the close-up map to a better view.





You can use the query icon to keep track of enemy troop movement. First, click on a member of the army in order to bring up an information box. Then...



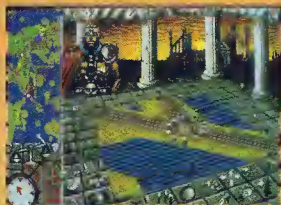
...move the information box up out of the way so you can continue to play the game.



When you want to see a lot of detail, you can zoom in close.



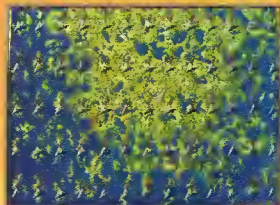
Using the speed control, you can temporarily kick the game into high gear so your troops move across the map faster or create weapons faster. Of course, everything else goes faster too, including your enemies!



By selecting to play a randomly generated territory instead of a territory from the map-selection chart, you can generate some unusual maps.



Eventually, you'll beat a lot of the territories on the map selection chart, but...



...only the best player will make it to the 195th territory, found in the lower-right corner of the map. Good luck!

# ONE IS THE LONELIEST NUMBER

A LOOK AT MULTIPLAYER GAMING



by Bill Kunkel and Joyce Worley





he advent of the computer age brought profound changes to the dynamics of gaming. For centuries, with a few exceptions like the card game solitaire, games were played as tests of skill involving at least two opposing players. When computer technology joined the fun, one of its big selling points was its ability to serve as an all-purpose 24-hour opponent with user-programmable playing skill. From the earliest chess playing programs to today's state-of-the-art, AI-based strategy games like *Risk* (Mastertronic)—in which the computer handles as many as a half-dozen different players, each with its own "personality" and strategic tendencies—the ability to stand in for human players has always been one of the computer's greatest assets.

Unlike the video game, which has remained connected to the family TV set and thus maintained its status as a family entertainment appliance, computer use evolved along more solitary lines. Computers were taken out of the American living room and ensconced in work stations with access physically limited to a single user.

The stereotype of the computer nerd developed from these social conditions. While the video gamer was interacting both with the game system and other human players, the computerist remained a hermitlike figure, alone in a room, contesting against a silicon chip for dominance. Nanoelectronic fantasy role-playing gamers gathered in dorms to run their characters through the latest adventure scenario, but the computer RPG fan engaged in a profoundly different gaming experience. Programs like *Wizardry* cast the computerist not in a true role-playing situation, but rather in a tactical war game disguised as a role-playing adventure.

There have, however, been some meaningful attempts to bring multiplayer gaming to the computer environment, mostly within the sports, arcade and classic strategy genres.

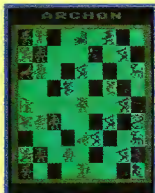
## COMPANY

### FOR THE CLASSICS

The computer's earliest role in gaming was as a human surrogate. As any devoted game-player can attest, the toughest part of the gaming experience can be finding appropriate opposition. Chess players, for instance, must seek out not just opponents, but comparably skilled opponents. It's no fun for a grandmaster to kick the butt of some poor novice (it's no thrill for the novice either, of course).

Most electronic versions of classic strategy games have been measured by the gaming skill of the computer player(s). So, while programs like *Chessmaster 2100* (Software Tools), *Sargon IV* (Spinnaker) and *Distant Armies* (Eagle Tree Software) contain two-player modes, this feature is not

**Right: Electronic Arts' Archon.**  
**Below: Hoyle's Book of Games** allows one human player to compete against a collection of computer-guided opponents.



given a lot of attention. It is still presumed that two human players will always prefer to sit down at a real chessboard and move real pieces.

Many strategy games offer two-player modes, but not all do. Freetail's classic *Archon* (Electronic Arts) and *Archon II* (EA) as well as Interplay's *Battle Chess* all feature two-player options. On the other hand, *Gin King/Cribbage King* (Software Tools) and Warren Schwader's *Hoyle's Book of Games* (Sierra), two popular card-playing programs, and the Diplomacy-like *Lords of Conquest* (EA) allow only one human player to participate against a collection of computer-guided opponents.

Other programs, like the new computer version of Parker Brothers' *Risk* (Mastertronic), allow multiple players, either human or computer.

### HEAD TO HEAD

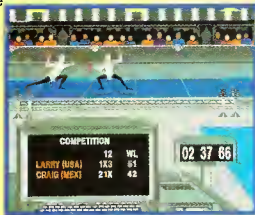
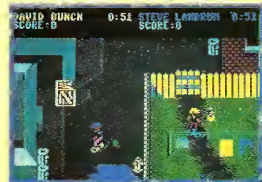
The type of game most commonly associated with multiple players is the head-to-head contest. In these games, player surrogates occupy the screen at the same time, contesting with one another for the completion of some goal. Games of this type go back to the dawn of electronic gaming. Pang games, after all, were head-to-head contests, as were the ubiquitous tank games. The fact is, in those primitive times, it was not possible

to develop programs sophisticated enough to drive a computer player, so almost all games were two-player, either head to head or alternating turns. As the technological prowess of programmers increased, it became possible to produce computer opponents of suitable skill to test even the best human players.

One of the first great head-to-head computer games was Eric Hammond's *Julius Erving and Larry Bird Ga One-on-One* (EA) in which players guide electronic simulations modeled on the roundball legends of the title. Computer and video game programs soon reached the point where entire teams could be managed electronically, but sports games, from action strategy programs like *Superstar Ice Hockey* (SportTime) to stat-based contests like *MicroLeague Baseball* (MISA), continue to offer multiplayer options.

Today, the most commonly seen head-to-head games are in the martial arts genre originally established by Data East's *Karate Champ*. Countless subsequent imitations, from *World Karate Champion* (Epyx) to Tabey, Kosaka and Tiberi's *Budokan: The Martial Spirit* (EA), have employed the same side-view perspective in which on-screen combatants face off in a contest of leaps, kicks and fist blows.

Other head-to-head sports contests include *Jordan Vs. Bird: One on One* (EA) by Joe Hellesen



**Skate or Die!** (top) and **Budokan:** **The Martial Spirit** (middle), both by EA. **Left: Summer Games**, by Epyx.

and Mark Madland, the long-awaited follow-up to the original; *GBA Championship Basketball: Two-on-Two* (Gamestar) with two-man roundball teams and the option of head-to-head or cooperative play; *Star Rank Boxing* and *Star Rank II* from Gamestar and Accolade's *Fight Night*, which are all action-strategy boxing games; *WWF-MicroLeague Wrestling* (MLSA) and *Hardball II* (Accolade), in which players can select between either a batter or pitcher's perspective at any point in the game.

Konami's *Double Dribble* is a five-on-five contest featuring full-court action and top quality graphics. Roundball fans take it to the boards playing head to head against another human, or hone their skills playing against the computer.

TV Sports: *Basketball* (Cinemaware) is a five-on-five simulation styled to look like a network broadcast. Players can create a 28-franchise league, then play the game arcade style or as a coach, against a friend or against the computer.

Some programs offer a mixture of turn-taking and head-to-head competition. Multiveut software like Epyx's *Summer Games* and *The Games* (Winter Edition) offer multiplayer action (up to eight players competing in a series) with both head-to-head and turn-taking events. The head-to-head events tend to be races, whether on bicycle or ice skates. Similarly, the ultra-cool *Skate or Die!* (EA) features a head-to-head skateboard race through a series of urban backstreets among its several events.

Ice action has inspired numerous multiplayer contests, including Gamestar's *FaceOff*. It features large animated hockey players, a coaching mode that lets the gamer edit statistics and set up league play and even a close-up camera for the fights.

Konami's *Blades of Steel* features simultaneous play for two gamers, or play against the computer, in three difficulty levels. It includes most of the elements from real hockey, such as passing, checking, slap shooting, fighting, goal tending and penalties.

UBI Soft crossed soccer with rollerball and came up with a futuristic ice stadium game, *Skate Wars*. The coach drafts a team, choosing players based on their different characteristics, then competes in a wild melee that includes pits, stone pillars, spiked balls and other obstacles.

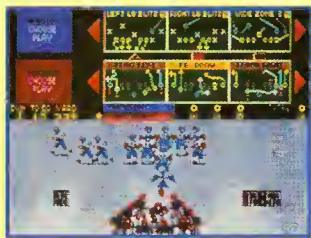
One of the most innovative methods for handling head-to-head play is the split-screen approach pioneered in games like Lucasfilm's *Ballblazer* and Mike Reidel's *Spy Vs. Spy* (First Star). In these games, we are given not one but two visual presentations, allowing two players to move independently over a large landscape.

In *Ballblazer*, two opponents drive "rotafloats," high-speed vehicles used in an imaginary futuristic sporting event. These rotafloats are capable of capturing, holding and shooting a ball that must be put into one of two moving goals in order to score points. Action is seen from a pair of first-person perspectives through the split-screen displays.

*Spy Vs. Spy*, on the other hand, takes an external view of its surrogate characters, the white and black-clad secret agents created by Prohias for *Mad* magazine over 25 years ago. Each spy is seen from a slightly elevated side view as he moves from room to room in an embassy building, springing traps on the other in true cartoon fashion. When both spies move into the same area, the dual screens disappear and are replaced by a single "combat" screen, where the enemy agents pound the stew out of one another with wooden clubs. *Spy* later spawned a pair of sequels, *Reidel's Spy Vs. Spy II: The Island Capers* and *Jim Nangano's Arctic Antics: Spy Vs. Spy III*, both of which also made use of a split-screen perspective.



**UBI Soft's Pro Tennis Tour (top) features six training programs. John Madden Football (right) has over 100 plays.**



Very few games have used the split-screen technique, and those that have were not all successful. Accolade's *TKO*, a boxing game in which two boxers are seen in close-up, each facing the user from his own display screen, is a case in point. The boxers, visible only from the shoulders up, toss punches straight at the viewer, and as the match advances, a realistic series of bumps, bruises, cuts and black eyes appear on the faces of the pugilists. Not only did many gamers find this visual presentation disturbing, the split screen in this case actually destroyed the illusion of head-to-head combat, which it was intended to enhance. With both boxers punching toward the screen, the entire process was reduced to an abstract and rather remote experience in which neither of the combatants ever made physical contact.

## SPORTS, SPORTS ... AND MORE SPORTS ...

Sports games lend themselves especially well to multiplayer modes. The current trend in such simulations allows one human to compete against a computer while also providing options for two (and sometimes more) people to play against each other. This gives the gamer a great opportunity to practice and perfect his or her playing skills before facing off against a friend.

Electronic Zoo's *Tennis Cup* provides split-screen visuals shown in first-person perspective, with a choice of grass, clay, hard court or indoor play. There are 32 pros, each with unique playing skills, to challenge, or two people can play head to head. Better yet, two players can team up against the computer in a doubles match.

*Pro Tennis Tour* (UBI Soft) features six training programs, either against an opponent or against the computer, with on-screen scoring, realistic sound effects, and 3-D instant replay. The gamer must participate in championship tournaments, in an attempt to improve his world ranking in the sport.

Three new pigskin games provide multiplayer options.

*John Madden Football* (Electronic Arts) contains 17 teams, and the on-screen playbook has over 100 plays. Zoom cameras make tracking the players easy while John Madden keeps track of the stats.

Sega's *Joe Montana Football* lets the gamer create new plays, assign them position by position, then add the play to their team's playbook. The gamer can customize the rosters, change each player's skill ratings and get scouting reports. Special viewing angles, instant replay and highlight films of games add sophistication to the simulation.



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TV Sports: *Football* (Cinemaware) features realistic graphics, individual and team statistics and a 28-team, 16-game schedule. Two players can compete in arcade-styled gridiron action, or as sideline coaches, or play cooperatively against the computer.

*Cyberball* (Sega, for play on Genesis) is a futuristic football game featuring grappling robots executing classic football tactics. It's a rough sport; linemen may get their heads blown off, and the offense can use turbo boost to burst through the robots.

*Tommy Lasorda Baseball* (Sega) provides 24 teams in four leagues, with on-screen windows that provide the speed at the last pitch, number of balls, strikes and outs, inning, score, batter's information (name, average and number of home runs hit) and pitcher's data (name, earned-run average, stamina and—something real coaches would like—how many more pitches the player is good for). An overhead view shows runners advancing, and multiple stat screens keep the computer coaches on top of the action.

Orel Hersher's *Strike Zone* (Tradewest/Melbourne House) is based on the coin-op game. The gamers control the batter and the runners, trying not only to win their games, but to gain salary boosts based on improved stats.

## COOPERATIVE PLAY: GETTING ALONG WITH OTHERS

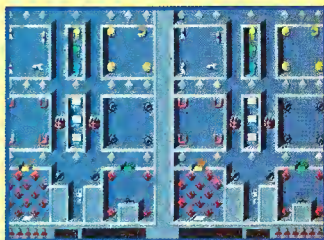
One of the most satisfying kinds of multiplayer contest is the cooperative game. In cooperative games, more than one player surrogate appears on-screen at any one time, but not in conflict. Rather, the players join forces in order to obtain a higher overall score.

In some cases, players have the option of playing cooperatively or head-to-head. In the two-player version of the venerable arcade classic *Wizard of War* (Bally), a pair of gun-toting futuristic shack trappers appear at the start of the game, one in the lower left and one in the lower right of the maze. The player-characters are then moved through the maze independently where they can assist one another in destroying the gallery of grotesques or turn their fire on one another.

In most cooperative games, however, there is no advantage in taking out a fellow player-character. In fact, in most such games, such intermeddled combat is not even possible. This more socially can-

scious tradition is represented by games like the coin-op version of *Double Dragon*, *Double Dragon II* (Mastertronic), *Gauntlet*, *Gauntlet II* (Mindscape), *Hybris* (Discovery) and *Battle Squadron* (Innerprise).

In the *Double Dragon* games, players control a pair of martial arts mavenes as they move across a horizontally scrolling landscape, bottling on endless parades of over-aggressive street people in search of a kidnapped female. The players must cooperate in order to succeed in the overall mission, and once the action gets going, it resembles a full-scale movie brawl, complete with choirs and barrels being smashed over heads.



Top and middle: Live Studio's *Future Classics Collection*. Bottom left and right: *Super Games Pak*, by Odyssey Software.

The *Gauntlet* games offer a different visual perspective: a slightly angled top-down view with multidirectional scrolling as multiple players, representing everything from warriors to wizards, pool their skills in order to obtain more treasure and advance to higher levels. These action-oriented fantasy games have been extremely successful both at the arcades and in home-computer format.

*Hybris* and *Battle Squadron* represent yet another type of cooperative game. In these con-

tests, one or two users pilot armed spaceships along a vertically scrolling landscape, combining to clear the path of obstacles and enemies.

## TWO-PLAYER ARCADE ACTION

*Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles II: The Arcade Game* (Ultra) lets two gamers combine forces to battle Shredder and his foot soldiers in a fight that extends through ten levels. There are over 700 monsters to overcome in this extravaganza.

Spectrum Holobyte's *Faces*, designed in the Soviet Union by the creator of *Tetris*, is a block-stocking variation that has the player creating faces either head to head or against the computer. There's also a tournament mode for up to ten players.

Live Studio's *Future Classics Collection* contains five action games. *Diskman*, *Block-alanche*, *Diet Riot*, *TankBattle* and *Last 'n' Maze* are all joystick-controlled contests. The games provide options for single players (using full-screen graphics), split-screen (when using dual joysticks for simultaneous head-to-head action) or split-screen against the computer.

Another collection of games with multiplayer options comes from Odyssey Software. *Super Games Pak* contains three titles. *Deathbots* is a multilevel scrolling game with giant robots. One or two players try to destroy the guards and get to the gamma bomb before it explodes. *Jailbreak* is a Breakout contest, with 100 levels and lots of special bricks and powers. *ByteMan* features a yellow gabbler eating bits that can be found scattered through the maze.

## HUMAN PLAYERS REQUIRED!

The rarest of all multiplayer computer games is that which requires more than one human player. Very few computer games are published without a solitaire mode, but the experiment has been attempted, most prominently by Ozark Softscape (Don Buntin and Alan Watson) with *M.U.L.E.* and later with *Rabat Rascales* (both Electronic Arts).



M.U.L.E. was one of the earliest cult classics of computer gaming, a contest requiring anywhere from two to four human players engaged in a race to exploit the resources of an alien planet.

Though M.U.L.E. was not a big seller, Buntin remained convinced that a computer game could be produced that would successfully incorporate multiple human players. So, Ozark tried again in 1986 with *Robot Rascals*, a scavenger hunt game involving two to four human players, each using a surrogate robot to search a multi-directionally scrolling landscape for any of several unusual objects (including a digital donut, transistor taco and silicon salad) required to win the contest. *Robot Rascals* is also part card game and makes use of two decks of cards: item cards and luck cards. The item deck features artifacts that can be found on the surface of the gaming area (a place called Laustenford) while the luck cards give players a shot at improving their hands, frequently at the expense of another player.

Unfortunately, *Robot Rascals* hasn't exactly broken sales records, and the question of whether or not two-player-minimum computer games are viable still remains to be proven.

Ivan "Ironman" Stewart's *Super Off Road* (Mastertronic) can be played by up to three people simultaneously. It puts a trio of gamers into off-road race trucks, through winding courses that are obstacle strewn. Although one gamer can compete against computer drivers, the competition is much more intense when three gamers vie for first place.

Innerprise's *Final Orbit* features new life forms springing up on the garbage-dump moon. One or two players battle the moldy mutants through nine levels and four difficulty settings in an attempt to reach the core of the moon and blow up the debris.

*Blue Max* by Three-Sixty Software is a compelling dogfight simulation for one or two players flying solo, as a team, or against each other. The pilots can fight dogfights and fly missions to destroy bridges or other targets, in eight famous aircraft of World War I.

## MULTIPLAYER, MULTILOCATION

\*\*\* (MODEM GAMES) \*\*\*

The great contemporary arena for multiplayer games is the telecommunications universe. On-line services like Genie, DELPHI, America On-Line and CompuServe offer a wide variety of multiplayer games combining the best of both worlds: Users can play at any time while getting a real workout from a human player. While artificial intelligence (AI) in computers has come a long way, computers

still tend to play many games in a somewhat predictable manner.

In addition to the various on-line games available (see "Modem-Mania" and "Worlds of Kesmai," VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT, August '89), many new releases include modem-play as an extra feature. This has proven especially popular with flight simulators, enabling users over a wide geographic area to engage in air combat



**MicroLeague's WWF Wrestling II allows gamers to connect to each other via modem.**

without ever leaving their work stations.

In *The Other Side*, by Tom Snyder Productions (also responsible for the early multiplayer game *Bannercatch*), users employ modems to engage in a cooperative gaming experience in which the object is the building of a bridge between the two players.

MicroLeague's *WWF Wrestling II* (MSLA) for the Amiga and IBM offers users a modem-play feature that will enable one user to manage Hulk Hogan while his opponent, via the telephone lines, gives orders to Randy "Macho Man" Savage. Both players watch the results on their respective monitors.

## GAMEBOY AND MULTIPLAYER

\*\*\* VIDEO GAMING \*\*\*

As mentioned at the start of this article, video games have never been estranged from the multiplayer format as computers have. In fact, multiple play is hotter than ever in the video-gaming universe, with Nintendo putting a heavy premium on this feature in all new approved titles.

But perhaps the most significant advancement for multiplayer gaming has been the success of the Nintendo GameBoy, equipped with a special cable that allows head-to-head play. As a result of this capability, adaptations have been

made in many existing titles, transforming formerly solitary contests like *Tetris* into excellent head-to-head games. Perhaps once players see the appeal of multiuser gaming first hand, we'll see a greater emphasis on programs of this type in the computer universe.

Similarly, the Atari Lynx provides a handheld playground for multiplayer. The Lynx can be connected with other units via the ComLynx cable, and many current Lynx entertainment titles support multiplayer activity for two players; some are even playable by up to eight Lynxes in a free-for-all of simultaneous competition. *California Games* and *Zarlor Mercenary* are each for duo-play. *Rampage*, *Gunfire* and *Zenophobe* are for up to four players, and *Todd's Adventure in Slime World* is an eight-gamer extravaganza in which the gamers team to battle blood flies, maggots and a variety of nasty opponents.

The new lineup of Lynx games for 1991 include some sports games for multiplayer, such as *World Class Soccer* and *NFL Football*, each for four players. *Grid Runner* and *Tournament Cyberball 702* are also four-player contests.

One of the most outstanding new releases for hand play of the year is *Checkered Flag*, a six-gamer auto race in which players see their opponents approaching in a rear-view mirror, in addition to seeing the cars racing ahead of them on the track. *WarBirds* is another masterpiece of multigaming programming; it allows up to six Lynxes to compete in aerial dogfights using a variety of aircraft.

NEC will introduce a low-priced connecting cable for their TurboExpress handheld system in 1991. The TurboLink makes possible multiplayer competition on the small colorful screen, and the first two-gamer contest to take advantage of the system is currently on the drawing board. *Bomber Man* should be available on retailer's shelves by midyear.

## THE FUN IS

\*\*\* JUST BEGINNING \*\*\*

Multiplayer fun is well ensconced as a major part of the software-entertainment scene, but it's actually only just beginning. The current feeling in software circles is that as many titles should be made to support multigaming as is feasible. The trend continues to grow, and the trickle of these titles has grown to a flood.

In the meantime, remember: It takes two to tango, and computers are notoriously bad dancers. So do your part for the cause. Reach out and play a game against a human being today. ☺



**California Games II for the IBM PC will support multiplayer action.**

# 10

## TIPS

### for SMARTER BUYING



### How to Choose the Games You'll Like Best

BY JOYCE WORLEY

**N**o one likes to make mistakes, especially not costly ones. Shopping for software may be filled with fun and hope, but it's also risky business in these days of conflicting claims by manufacturers. Every game company says its latest blockbuster is the hottest thing on disk or cartridge, but they can't all be right. How's a gamer to know where to invest the bucks and when to let a highly touted title pass?

Not even the pros have foolproof answers to that question. There's hardly a player who hasn't shelled out loot for some great new game, then felt cheated because it didn't live up to expectations. Sometimes it's unavoidable; the 116th room of the 14th castle on the 59th level may not have the hot action you hoped for, but it's difficult to know that until you've played the game. Sometimes the disappointment occurs because some important fact didn't reveal itself until the purchase was already made and the box was opened.

Before you buy, here are ten points to consider that should help you avoid some potential mistakes.



#### *What is the theme of the game?*

If you don't like the subject matter, stop here. There's no point spending money if you're not keen on the topic. Don't buy even the greatest of military simulations if you don't like war games. Don't buy flight simulators if planes make you sick. Similarly, the hottest sports title won't bring much pleasure if you don't like that type of computer entertainment.



#### *Look at the playscreens on the back of the box.*

Ignore the fancy art on the front; it has little to do with what's inside. Instead, check the playscreens. Pay particular attention to screens of the computer or gaming system you have. It doesn't matter how great the art looks in VGA mode if you own a Commodore 64.

When examining the playscreen, try to tell exactly what kind of game it is. See if the control system is explained. If you see a message box pictured, you should be able to tell if the player interacts with the game by typing commands or by choosing actions from a menu or icon bank. If there is no message box or icons and all you see is a character moving across a screen, then you know it's an action game.

Become an informed purchaser. Learn to differentiate between graphics that are merely introductions or title screens and those that are actually playscreens. Often there is a very large difference between the fancy graphics that lead off a game and the ones actually used during play.





### *Check the creative team that developed the game.*

What have they done before? Did you like their previous offerings? If not, you may not like their newest work. On the other hand, if your favorite designer, artist or programmer has a new game, it's always worth checking it out.



### *Who is the publisher?*

Does the publishing house have a good reputation for bug-free software that lives up to its advertising claims? The publisher is responsible for the quality control of the title and also for follow-up and customer support for any problems that arise, so make certain you are buying into a company you trust. This isn't to say that a new publisher can't do a good job; often they try harder. But unless you are familiar with the company's reputation, realize that there is some risk.



### *Read the reviews.*

Let the experts tell you what they think of a title. Reviewers look at software through trained and experienced eyes, and oftentimes their opinions are the best guides a would-be purchaser can find. At the same time, try to figure out which reviewers have opinions that often coincide with your own and which reviewers you disagree with. For example, if you generally like the same games that Reviewer A rates highly, you should pay particular attention to the titles he likes. On the other hand, if you generally disagree with Reviewer B, then read his reviews for information about theme and content, but take his opinion with a grain of salt.



### *Try to see the game.*

Some computer stores will still let you play-test a title, and many video games can be rented before purchase. Some stores have point-of-purchase demonstrations or displays. If there is any way at all to see the game in action before you buy, do so before you shell out your hard-earned bucks.



### *Check the system and hardware requirements.*

This may seem obvious, but a lot of people make this basic error when purchasing software. If you don't own the recommended hardware, don't get the game.



### *Imagine how this game will fit into your existing library.*

By reading the box and studying the game screens, you should be able to determine the kind of entertainment it represents. Then ask yourself how many games of this specific type you already have. If you have several already, decide if you want another game that uses a similar play mechanic. If it is completely different from anything you have, try to imagine whether you'll enjoy the action.



### *Ask about the game.*

Ask your friends if they've played the game, ask your user group, ask about it online, ask the store manager. Try to collect as much information and as many opinions about the game as possible before you make your buying decision.



### *Play the original.*

If the game was originally a pay-for-play machine, take a trip to your local arcade. The computer- or video-game versions may not be identical to the original, but if you don't like the coin-op, chances are you won't much care for the home version.

These common-sense suggestions and a systematic approach to game-buying will pay off for you. Follow these steps to help make your buying decisions. You'll end up with software you enjoy more, and a lot fewer disappointments. ♪

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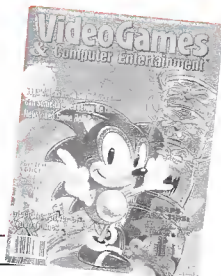
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CLUSA

# COMPUTER GAME REVIEWS

## RoboSport

MAXIS

Version: Macintosh (\$59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*RoboSport* is a cathartic alternative to war in a near future in which a worldwide revolt of military computers renders traditional military conflict impossible. The super-computer born of this electronic revolution knows that humans need an outlet for their violent emotions, so in 2010 it creates this contest between two teams of robot warriors.

In keeping with Maxis' reputation, *RoboSport* has depth and subtlety unmatched by any future sport, with the exception of the nonelectronic *Blood Bowl* (Games Workshop). Play goes rapidly for what is essentially a brain game, but it takes time to learn and appreciate this strategy-oriented simulation.

Designer/programmer Edward Kilham has done everything possible to make the process as painless as possible. He carefully pruned away all needless complexity in the play mechanics, and the quick-start mode shields beginning and intermediate players from the rigors of fully customized setup. (Advanced *RoboSport*ers will enjoy the chance to individually equip and position each of the team's robots.)

The structure is flexible but not unwieldy. In setup mode, the computerist can create a team, pick one of three arenas and select from among five sets of rules. Survival is a pure fight in which teams earn points for inflicting wounds and kills and lose them for taking such damage. Capture the flag still awards points, as in survival, but teams earn big bonuses for snatching the opposition's flag and bringing it to the home base and preventing the reverse.

*RoboSport* offers head-to-head play

*RoboSport, by Maxis, will allow two gamers to compete head-to-head, via modem, and up to four gamers, using AppleTalk.*



between humans on the same or separate computers. It supports two machines for modem games and up to four if all have AppleTalk. Computer opposition furnishes a good solitaire challenge at a range of skill settings.

During the edit mode, the computerist enters movement and fire orders for every robot on the team for the ten-to-15 second turn. After both sides receive commands, the movie mode displays all the movement and combat as it occurs. The program considers the time cost of every action to implement orders in the proper sequence. Simultaneous movement makes it much harder to execute plans than in a game with alternating turns, and the extra uncertainty boosts the tension to nail-biting level in close contests.

The arena is displayed in angled overhead perspective with a convincing illusion of three-dimensionality. The robots are very small, and on the Macintosh they're sometimes hard to distinguish if there's a lot of terrain. Color solves identification problems, but even the black-and-white graphics are quite satisfactory.

Only time will tell if Maxis has given computer gaming another classic, like its *SimCity*, but there's no doubt that *RoboSport* is an impressive entry to the sports-simulation category. If you like absorbing, mind-stretching games, put *RoboSport* on the shopping list, and then clear some hours for roll-up-your-sleeves computer entertainment.

—Arnie Katz

Maxis  
Two Theatre Square, Suite 230  
Orinda, CA 94563-3041  
(415) 254-9700

## RoboCop 2

DATA EAST

Version: Amigo (\$44.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Destroy Cain. That sounds like an easy



enough task for the armored cyborg called RoboCop. It isn't. To win this frenetic side-view scrolling shooter, the player must blast through three missions, each of which is a multilevel, multiscreen complex.

Only when RoboCop has withstood the withering barrages from a mob of malevolent minions can he come face to face with Cain, the dreaded evil robocop.

RoboCop has three lives at the start of the game, but he gains an additional one if he saves all the hostages calling for help in a mission. Since armed captors guard these unfortunates, it usually means a fire fight before the hero can save a prisoner.

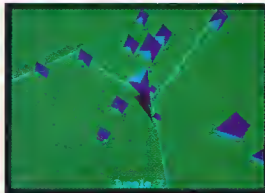
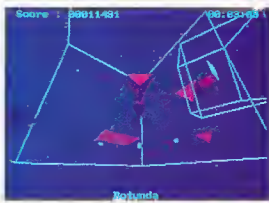
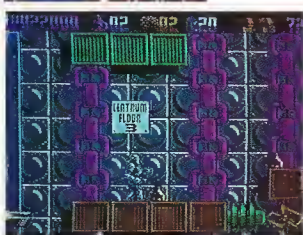
Bonus objects (sometimes hidden inside things that must be destroyed) either improve the character's weapon or alter game parameters. The heavy weapons are three-way fire, scatter shooting and rapid fire. Game-play bonuses include extra time, more energy and improved resistance to enemy fire.

The graphics are colorful, clean and reasonably detailed. Numerous short, special animations breathe extra life into both the player character and the roving enemies.

The music is all right, but nothing special. The theme on the Amiga edition lacks the fullness associated with games for that system. Sound effects are good, especially if you like constant explosions, but again, not extraordinary.

In short, *RoboCop 2* is a well-implemented example of a genre that has been a video-gaming staple for the last several years. There is almost nothing new about it, even allowing for the fact that it is loosely based on the movie of the same name.

Video gamers (*RoboCop 2* is also available for play on Nintendo) might judge it as competent, but uninspired. It deserves more attention from computerists. The reason: neither the Amiga nor the IBM PC software libraries have



nearly enough all-out action contests. So ignore the plot, don't worry about originality and keep your trigger finger pumping for a heart-pounding arcade experience on the home computer.

—A. K.

Data East USA, Inc.  
1850 Little Orchard St.  
San Jose, CA 95125  
(408) 286-7074

## Continuum

DATA EAST

Versions: Amiga (\$49.95),  
IBM PC (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Raising one's consciousness has never been an easy task, but just when one thinks one has seen it all, along comes an innovative product like *Continuum*. Although the basic premise of the game sounds uninspired (searching a 256-room 3-D maze for 32 objects), it's a pleasant surprise to discover that all the fun is in getting there.

Each room in the maze is individually designed to present different challenges, sights and sounds. Colored platforms scattered at different altitudes throughout the rooms are in logical, rather than random, patterns.

The player controls a mobile, which can turn in any direction and develop forward thrust. However, the mobile is not capable of generating lift, so it does not fly in a conventional sense. Instead, altitude comes from moving the Mobile onto one of the colored platforms, where it begins to bounce. As the mobile gains momentum, it bounces higher and higher. The player then uses the forward thruster to jump from one platform to the next, where the bouncing begins anew. By this method, the mobile moves through either a window or door into an adjoining room to continue the search for crystals and cubes (16 of each).

Although there is an optional

view from inside the mobile's cockpit, the game is impossible to play that way. During the game, the view of the mobile is from outside and behind, but one may alter the vertical aspect throughout the entire 180-degree arc from directly above to directly below. This is important, because each individual develops a favorite perspective that's best suited to their own playing ability. My personal choice was about 30 degrees above center, where the mobile's shadow acts as a guide when "falling" from the apogee above one platform to the next.

The game may be played in action or emotion mode. Action mode involves one or two players racing the clock to find the aforementioned objects. Players begin with three minutes on the clock, receive an extra minute for each room they enter and get a bonus minute for every 10,000 points scored. Points are scored for staying aloft and finding objects. Game play is further enhanced by the inclusion of force fields and pesky bad guy mobiles that keep players from getting where they want to go.

Emotion mode eliminates the pressure of the clock and the scoreboard to let the adventurer explore one section of the maze for a different purpose. The maze is divided into 12 blocks of rooms that represent human emotional states: dream, motivation, orientation, stimulate, energize, relax, adapt, awaken, develop, concentrate, stamina and meditate. According to the documentation, the color, sound and nature of the rooms in each region are scientifically proven to stimulate the corresponding areas of the psyche. Although it's strange to be manipulated by a machine, believe it or not, at least some of these regions did evoke a response.

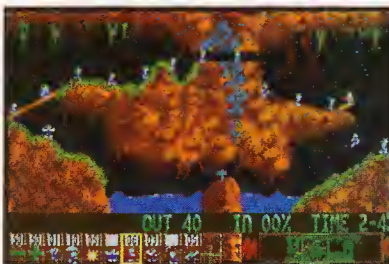
A sound board is essential for this game. VGA graphics, however, are not. The game employs a 16-color palette that should keep the psychiatrists happy, since it contains all the primary colors.

It is quite refreshing to find a cerebral arcade title that can appeal to novices and hot sticks alike. Hats off to Data East for their best title released to date!

—Ed Dille

Data East USA, Inc.  
1850 Little Orchard St.  
San Jose, CA 95125  
(408) 286-7074

Once you've experienced *Lemmings*, it's possible that you will have played one of the best computer games of the year.



**Lemmings**  
PSYGNOSIS  
Versions: Amiga (\$49.95),  
Atari ST (\$49.95), IBM PC (\$49.95),  
Macintosh (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*Lemmings* is the first independent project by Dave Jones' DMA Design group (*Menace*, *Blood Money*) since going solo—Psygnosis still serves as publisher and distributor. It's certainly an auspicious beginning for the team; *Lemmings* is definitely top banana in the strategy/puzzle category.

Lemmings, the real creatures, are little rodents that control their population by committing mass suicide. In *Lemmings* the computer game, every lemming is a valued member of the animal kingdom and must be protected at all costs. To do so, the player can transform individuals into builders, diggers, smashers, climbers or floaters. The object is to create bridges over potential death traps or excavate through obstacles so that a required percentage of lemmings can escape the vicinity.

*Lemmings* oozes playability. The game consists of 120 levels divided into four stages of difficulty. The first stage of 30 levels is just for fun and consists of easy puzzles to get the newcomer acclimated. Other stages are "tricky," "taxing" and "mayhem." The first level of any of the four stages is user-selectable. A password after each level is completed lets the player avoid going through it again.

*Lemmings* can be played either by one gamer or in a two-player competitive mode, which splits the screen down the middle. Each lemming team is identified by color. Unfortunately, the second player must provide his or her own mouse. A joystick routine would have been more acceptable.

The graphics and sound truly complement *Lemmings'* addictive game play. The lemmings march single file across the screen, straight into any danger



in their path. By turning the wonderfully animated rodents into excavators, bridge builders or other helpers, the route can be tailored to save some of the pack.

The lemmings are very small, but they are well-drawn, using a fair amount of detail for such tiny creatures. Other graphic touches, like the dancing flames atop sensors flanking the exits to each level, make the game visually appealing.

Squeaky rodent voices accompany certain activities. For example, when a builder is removed to let other lemmings pass, it cries out, "Oh no!" There are 21 charming soundtracks interspersed and a toggle to turn off the music when a player has had enough.

*Lemmings* is a charmer. These furry cuties are the most powerful English fun force to invade the U.S. since the Beatles. The on-screen creatures can best be described as lovable and amusing. They join with attractive graphic routines, clever puzzles and smooth action to provide a superlative play experience.

—Frank Eva

Psygnosis  
29 St. Mary's Court  
Brookline, MA 02146  
(617) 731-3553

## The Untouchables

OCEAN SOFTWARE

Versions: Amiga (\$39.95), Atari ST (\$39.95), Commodore 64 (\$29.95), IBM PC (\$39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

In *The Untouchables* you play the famed lawman Elliot Ness in a fight to the death with the forces of Al Capone. The multisectioned shoot-'em-up requires a steady hand and dead-eye aim to keep the criminals from taking over Chicago.

Graphics and animation are more than acceptable, and the scenarios are certainly interesting. Unfortunately, actual play is so incredibly tough that only the best of gamers will enjoy it.

The top two-thirds of the divided screen shows current action, and the lower shows the weapon in use, amount of ammunition, player's energy level and time remaining. Each gamer has a single life that is measured by the amount of energy he or she retains. Energy drops with each bullet that makes contact, but in some sections,

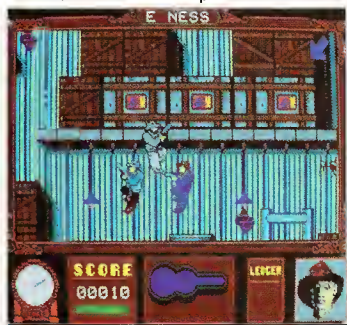
extra energy, time and ammunition can be gained from icons dropped by vanquished enemies. When the energy level reaches zero, the game ends.

There are six levels in *The Untouchables*. The first presents a side view of Elliot Ness as he moves through a warehouse filled with stacked boxes. Ness is pursued by Capone's guards and must shoot them with his machine gun before they do the same to him. The object is to follow the blinking arrow to locate Capone's heavily armed accountants (yes, accountants!), gun them down and confiscate the evidence they drop.

Level 2 takes place at a bridge. Ness must not only gun down Capone's henchmen, but also any bottles that randomly appear on the bridge. Next, the player, armed only with a double-barreled shotgun, faces ambushes in the alleys of Chicago. If Ness' energy runs low, the gamer can switch to another character while Ness recharges. This part of the game is reminiscent of *Hogan's Alley*. Discrimination is required, since stupid-but-innocent bystanders hang out the windows to see what's going on.

Level 4 involves a baby carriage to be guided down the concourse of the train station while avoiding enemy fire and shooting bad guys. The train station is chock-full of bystanders (don't these people ever learn how to duck?), so the task is even more difficult. Level 5 is a sudden-death scenario. A gangster with a hostage must be downed with a single shot—miss and the game is over. Finally, Level 6 is a rooftop shoot-out with

European games are often designed to be difficult, but the high degree of difficulty in *The Untouchables*, by Ocean Software, detracts from its enjoyability.



Capone's head hit man.

Each of the levels sports good graphics and a different play action, making the game very interesting. The one big flaw is that the game is extremely difficult. Few players will complete even the warehouse

scene, much less progress far enough to see the upper levels. European games are often difficult—that's the way the top guns over there like 'em. But *The Untouchables* is the toughest I've come across in a long time, so much so that the game ceased to be fun after a while.

—Dave Plotkin

Ocean Software  
Electronic Arts Distribution  
1820 Gateway Drive  
San Mateo, CA 94404  
(415) 572-ARTS

## Airstrike USA

SPOTLIGHT SOFTWARE  
Versions: Amiga (\$39.95),  
IBM PC (\$39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Its main claim to fame is that it is simple to learn to play, but difficult to beat. *Airstrike USA* features air battles against many types of enemy targets and full campaigns in which the player must almost single-handedly champion the allied cause.

The game proceeds in stages. The first is arming the plane, a somewhat tedious procedure that, fortunately, needs to be done only once each play session (unless you want to change the load). The gamer selects from cannon, air-to-air and air-to-ground missiles. There is a maximum weight, so it is important to balance the load properly for the mission at hand. For example, the pilot must forego maximum fire power in favor of fuel when going after enemy shipping, which can be a considerable distance away.

Next, the pilot studies the battlefield. Enemy and allied forces are scattered across the map, and the ultimate goal is to destroy enough of the enemy to make allied victory possible. Failure means the allied forces are destroyed. The position of all friendly forces are in the plane's database, but it contains the locations of only two enemy installations. Others are found through fly-bys. The balance of power for all allied and enemy targets is shown at the end of each round.

Takeoff splits the screen into two parts. The top shows the aircraft, with a view from above and behind. There is also a heads-up display (HUD) with critical information such as speed, direction and



**Spotlight's *Airstrike USA* is a simple to learn air-combat game that lacks an ability to challenge the gamer.**

weapon chosen. The bottom of the screen holds two maps and the currently selected target. The HUD shows an arrow that indicates the direction. When this arrow lines up in the center of the HUD's compass points, the plane is aimed right at the target.

Piloting the plane is simplified by its limited range of motion—left, right, up, down and barrel rolls. Control is via joystick, mouse or the keyboard, and all are easy to use. As the plane approaches a target, the pilot selects a weapon and fires when in range. Since the missiles feature auto-lockon, scoring a hit is not that hard.

An interesting bit of veracity occurs when the target is struck at extreme range. Such distant firepower normally only causes damage, not destruction. Then the allied forces can capture the location, an especially important technique to master when the target is a factory.

When low on fuel, the pilot must get close enough to an allied base to activate the automatic landing system, which puts the plane down.

*Airstrike USA* is not a very challenging game on the face of it. Even the enemy fighters can be toasted with a missile, or outmaneuvered and shot down with the cannon. Strangely, though, even when the pilot does well destroying enemy targets, the campaign does not seem to go favorably, and allied forces invariably lose. This is quite frustrating. So, although it's fun to play, the constant failure wears thin after a while.

—D. P.

Spotlight Software  
c/o Cinemaware  
4165 Thousand Oaks Blvd.  
Westlake Village, CA 91362  
(805) 495-6515

## Drakkhen

DRACONIAN  
Versions: Amiga (\$39.95),  
IBM PC (\$39.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

The player's quest is to restore magical control of the universe to the benevolent Drakkhen of the Draconian people. They



lost dominion of their world when the dragons stole the eight magic gems that rule the forces of nature: earth, water, air and fire.

The controlling dragons of the elements each have one son and one daughter. These mini-monarchs must be presented with the appropriate gem that grants a blessing to that prince or princess. The player must gather the eight gems, learn four incantations and distribute the gems properly to succeed. The plot should sound familiar; it's standard adventure fare.

Players create a four-character party that must remain intact throughout the game (i.e., no bringing in replacements without starting over, so save often). Each hero is rated in the standard attributes: strength, dexterity, constitution, intelligence and education (the latter can be equated to wisdom.) There's a limit of three rolls per character during generation, and gamers must accept the consequences of the third roll, if they take it.

Party members may be male or female, and sex places no restrictions on the attribute scores. Available character classes are familiar: scout (similar to a ranger), fighter/amazon, magician/sorceress and priest/priestess. Unfortunately, there's little imagination or strategy required for party composition; one must have one of each type to succeed.

Other aspects of *Drakkhen* transcend mere banality and represent actual regression within the genre. Current state-of-the-art availability moves games beyond restricted player options, yet *Drakkhen* is a completely sequential, linear adventure. Also, despite most player's abhorrence of cartography, *Drakkhen* requires extensive manual mapping. This is inexplicable, given the number of titles that feature auto-mapping.

Finally, there is the copy protection. Data East has created something that makes two-toned red and black errata



**Drakkhen's ability for independent action by each of the characters, instead of relying on "group dynamics," proves to be impressive.**

sheets read like bold-faced playing cards by comparison. *Drakkhen* uses a blue/black copy protection card that is virtually unreadable! Hey gang, if you want something that isn't easily reproduced, use a code wheel.

The product is redeemed by only one factor. *Drakkhen's* originality stems from its graphical perspective and, to a lesser extent, its mouse-driven icon interface. The latter could not be labeled intuitive, but once they get used to it, players will



find it appealing.

Some nuances to master are object manipulation and remembering to leave the fight icon turned off as one travels. A lot of the NPCs have something to say, so talk before hacking. If the fight icon is on, one enters combat automatically.

The VGA graphics are excellent, employing smooth animation over detailed 256-color backgrounds that give the land of *Drakkhen* weight and substance. The player views the action from a third-person perspective behind and slightly above the party. The cinematic effect will keep players coming back for more.

Movement is very smooth, with one exception. Take constant care not to have the party members step into any bodies of water. They immediately sink and drown. Finally, the ability for independent action by each of the characters, instead of always relying on "group dynamics," is impressive. It is possible to engage in one-on-one combat and concentrate experience points on the character that needs them.

In the aggregate, *Drakkhen* is an average game that could have been much better, had the folks at Data East been more attuned to the market.

—E. D.

Data East USA, Inc.  
1850 Little Orchard St.  
San Jose, CA 95125  
(408) 286-7074







## PowerMonger

ELECTRONIC ARTS

Versions: Amiga (\$49.95),  
Atari ST (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

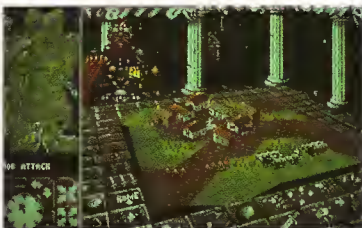
*PowerMonger*, the latest game of conquest from Bullfrog, uses a similar interface to *Populous*, the British design team's first game. It thrusts the player into a real-time world as a rather insignificant general who must take over the entire game map through diplomacy and battle.

The *PowerMonger* screen is divided into two sections. In the center is the closeup map of one part of the current sector. The detail is incredible. Arrows fly, men roast sheep for food, water flows and rain and snow fall from the sky. The left side of the screen shows an aerial view of the sector and icons for rotating and zooming in and out on the closeup view.

The strategic map can be switched to focus on contour, objects, settlements or food. This information instantly pops up via colors and dots as the player jumps back and forth between map profiles to keep up on sector changes. Orders in *PowerMonger* are issued entirely with the mouse, using command icons.

Watching over the action above the closeup view are the player's captain, any subordinates and the opposing captains. Click on a captain's medals to get important information about him and his troops.

*PowerMonger* is a fascinating war game that takes the player into the intricacies of conquest. It represents the workings of small groups of soldiers led



*PowerMonger, by Electronic Arts, is a unique game that opens the player's eyes to the human side of conquest.*

by people like Napoleon and Alexander the Great as they traveled across the land.

The most important factors in playing *PowerMonger* are the same as any real army's: supplying the men with food and attracting new troops. After conquering two or three sectors, the number of soldiers is greater, but so is the challenge of keeping them loyal, fed and strong. There are sheep all across the land to kill for food. If the army goes hungry, the soldiers will stop, even when in the midst of battle, to forage. This most often leads to defeat. Many games are cut short by lack of food. Make sure that there are enough supplies for everyone, even the inventors and inhabitants of the conquered towns.

The more complex options in the game, like inventing, diplomacy and spying, are not necessary in early sectors. The player should only attempt these functions after getting used to the rest of the game system. It is better to spend more time in the earlier sectors to build up numbers of men and food in an environment that is relatively easy to explore.

The graphics and sounds in *PowerMonger* are simply excellent. The 3-D effects in the closeup window are unique to Bullfrog. As the closeup view rotates, the program reveals more of the landscape to the player. The detail in the game is impressive. Birds fly overhead, angels of dead men rise to the heavens, waterfalls tumble from up high, men walk around in their daily routines and battles come to life right in front of your eyes. As the seasons change, rain and snow cover the closeup view.

Sound effects are very important in the game. Sheep "baa," men respond to commands by saying "yeah" in a way that reflects their enthusiasm or lack of it, soldiers celebrate wins, birds sing and workshops are noisy as townspeople invent new weapons.

*PowerMonger* is a unique game that opens the player's eyes to the human side of conquest. The economics of battle reveal themselves dramatically. Bullfrog brought all of the best elements of *Populous* into *PowerMonger*, then added a lot of realism while upgrading all the bells and whistles.

—Russ Ceccola

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San Mateo, CA 94404  
(415) 572-ARTS

than a game, actually; it's an obsession and a more delightful one than ever.

—J. M.

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## The Faery Tale Adventure

ELECTRONIC ARTS

For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Now that the folks at Electronic Arts have established themselves among the premier third-party developers for the Genesis, they have become a little more adventurous in deciding which of their popular computer titles should be adapted to the cartridge format. *The Faery Tale Adventure* is based on the role-playing fantasy developed by New World Computing Inc., an EA affiliate.

The plot concerns itself with a medieval fortune-hunter named Julian, who lives in the land of Holm with his two brothers. The game is made up of eight quests, which range from a simple "rescue the talsman" mission to a cataclysmic showdown with the Evil Necromancer. There's a lot of exploring to be done here—Holm is a big place, and the seemingly nonlinear game structure adds up to many hours of wayfaring. All the action takes place in real time, and the passage of time is nicely marked by the amount of daylight that Julian has to work with.

Unfortunately, the game's icon-based menu-selection system causes a number of problems right from the start. Specifically, the control pad response is a bit sluggish when you're trying to highlight different items in the menu box. You can tap a direction on the pad and take your finger off the button before the on-screen pointer actually moves! Granted, we're only talking about a fraction of a second here, but the delay usually triggers a subconscious reaction to hold the button down longer than necessary, which moves the pointer farther than you had intended. A flaw like this one is particularly frustrating in a game that requires you to struggle with the interface several times per minute.

Then there's the password option that allows you to save a game in progress. This sucker consists of no less than 36 characters, one of the longest I've ever seen. I realize that a battery backup would probably have increased the retail price, and I appreciate the cost-cutting—but there has to be a better way to do this!

Though these weaknesses have sand-bagged *The Faery Tale Adventure* and

threaten to drag it down into the RPG graveyard, this cartridge has certain qualities that suggest the presence of a video-game masterpiece lurking just around the corner, or at least the skeleton of one. Take a look at what happens when you don't have a green jewel to light your way when the sun goes down—Holm can get pretty spooky after dark. If it's true that the Genesis can only display 64 colors simultaneously, then they've picked the right ones; it really feels like nighttime. The game's music is equally atmospheric, and it would have been even more effective if the tunes had taken advantage of the Genesis' stereo capabilities.

One night, after playing the game for several hours, I decided to steer Julian back to the safety of the village of Tambry and let him get some rest like I was about to do. It was well past midnight in the game (and in the real world), so I led the brave wanderer into one of the buildings and walked him over to the bed.

"Julian is not sleepy," the information window politely informed me. "Too bad," I retorted, "Chris is sleepy." I hadn't stayed up this late since I tackled *Crystalis* on the NES.

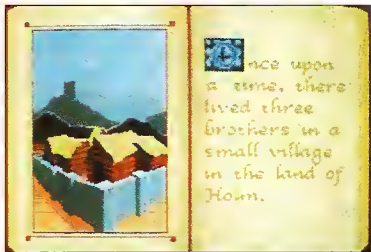
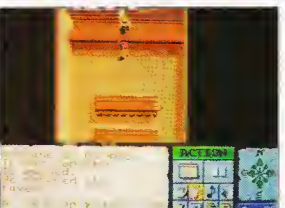
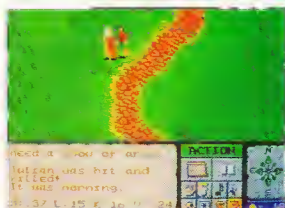
"Julian ate an apple," quipped the game, and I began the long and laborious process of writing the password down. This Julian guy obviously had a mind of his own and fully intended to continue his quest even as I switched the TV off.

I didn't sleep much that night—I kept hearing, in my head, the ominous theme that *The Faery Tale Adventure* plays every time your character is about to be attacked. This sinister melody haunted me for hours, preying upon my imagination the way good music should.

I remember thinking, any game that keeps me up for half the night and gets me to speak out loud to my TV set can't be all bad.

—Chris Bieniek

Electronic Arts  
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San Mateo, CA 94404  
(415) 571-7171





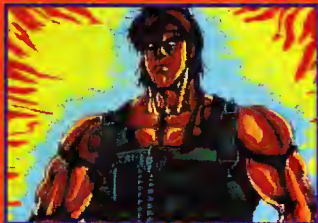
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## G A M I N G

# WHAT ELECTRONIC GAMING NEEDS IS A NATIONAL CONVENTION

by Arnie Katz

*Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month, his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. It's time for a midsummer night's dream, and Arnie has a doozy to share with you this time.*

**N**ext month's issue of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT will be packed from cover to cover with various forms of coverage of the Summer Consumer Electronics Show held in Chicago during the first week of June. There's no question that the biannual industry show is the place for journalists, distributors and buyers for discount and electronics stores to see the newest releases, talk to the publisher's executives and representatives and gaze at the future of home computer and video gaming.

The Electronic Industry Association, the group that sponsors CES, does a terrific job. They put on one of the world's largest trade shows twice a year. Anyone who hasn't attended one of these extravaganzas can't possibly imagine the logistics of getting all those exhibits and attendees together for their mutual benefit.

So when I say that electronic gaming needs its own national convention, it is definitely not intended as a slur against the Consumer Electronics Show (or other worthy events, including the Game Developers Conference, Software Publishers Association gathering, the three yearly Comdex conventions and the venerable New York institution—the Toy Fair). The National Electronic Gaming Convention, as I envision it, would augment, not replace, existing expositions. It could offer opportunities and activities that simply aren't practical or even desirable at any of the current shows.

Does electronic gaming need another convention? Not if it is simply "another convention." The national convention would be anything but business as usual. Before discussing the composition of the show itself, let's look at some of the reasons why it would be a good idea.

- Computer- and video-gaming companies constitute only a small fraction of total exhibitors at CES and Comdex. A show devoted solely to interactive-electronic entertainment would give our industry a chance to display its wares, court the media and present workshops and panels of spe-

cific interest to this business.

- Its sheer size makes it impossible to hold the Consumer Electronics Show anywhere except Chicago and Las Vegas, the two cities where it now alternates. A games-only show would be large, but still well within the capabilities of many American cities. A rotation plan could move the National Electronic Gaming Convention from region to region each year, so that every section of the country would get a chance to host.

- A national gaming convention would yield reams of publicity for the industry and the hottest new video-game and computer software. It is much easier for the game business to project the image it wants and deliver its messages to consumers without the distractions of unrelated product lines and cutting-edge technology from other fields.

- No show embraces all aspects of electronic gaming under one roof. Shows that feature coin-ops don't have home video and computer entertainment, while events with exhibits from the handheld dedicated electronic-game field seldom have the coin-op, video-game or computer-entertainment companies.

- With the exception of MacWorld Expo, which has only a small entertainment component, consumers have little chance to talk to the people behind interactive entertainment or see innovations before they reach retail outlets. A national gaming convention would bring the pros and the fans together in a meaningful way for the first time. Speeches and panels held on the "open" days of the show would let gamers see and hear the people who design, develop and publish their favorite hardware and software.

Let me confess that my concept of a



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"National Electronic Gaming Convention" isn't original. It came from the United Kingdom. The Computer Expo, held in London every fall, incorporates many features that also belong at any U.S. show.

The most important thing the national convention should borrow from our friends on the other side of the big pond is the notion that the national convention should welcome consumers as well as the trade professionals. I always feel a little guilty when I blather about the delights of the Consumer Electronics Show, because most gamers will never set foot inside the exhibit hall, much less visit the publishers' suites and gala press conferences, parties and receptions.

London's Computer Expo devotes its first two days to the industry and then throws open the door to thousands of enthusiastic electronic-game players. For the appropriate admission, they can walk the exhibit area, talk to designers and get inside information about their favorite hobby.

What kind of attractions could attendees expect at a national gaming convention? Here are some ideas:

## PROFESSIONAL EXHIBITION

Major electronic-gaming companies would set up for the trade at the start of the convention and then cater to the fans on the weekend.

## GAMING FLEA MARKET

This area would be open to small businesses and noncommercial sellers of accessories, fanzines, old games and such. The booths would be small and relatively inexpensive and would sell to show visitors.

## PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM

A crowded schedule makes it impossible for current shows to feature more than a couple of panels or

workshops addressed to the electronic-gaming industry. The first two days of the National Electronic Gaming Convention would provide a great opportunity to focus on more specific situations, opportunities and challenges.

## FAN PROGRAM

The two weekend days of the show would have a full schedule of speeches, panels and workshops on subjects of primary interest to the nation's gamers. Potential topics of these events might include how to publish a fanzine, a symposium on career opportunities in electronic gaming and talks by outstanding professionals and clinics to improve play.

## MEET THE PROS PARTY

If you love baseball, you can meet Nolan Ryan at trading card shows. Deadheads can see their idols at concerts. What about gamers? An afternoon or

industry love superstars like Chris Crawford, Alexey Pajitnov and Sid Meier. It's a cinch that gamers would feel the same way.

## TOURNAMENTS

Companies could run competitions with their hottest games, and the national show might even crown an "all around" champ!

## AWARDS BANQUET

At first glance, it may look like electronic gaming already has too many plaques and trophies. Yet among all the honors, there isn't a single one that comes directly from the folks who spend their money on the products. A national convention would be a perfect platform from which to launch a truly democratic slate of awards. Science fiction has its Hugos, why shouldn't electronic gaming have the Ralphs (after Ralph Baer, the father of the video game)?

That's just a sample of the wonders that would await attendees of the National Electronic Gaming Convention. Undoubtedly, others will conceive of even more exciting and enjoyable activities—if it ever turns from dream to reality.

How is it going to happen? It won't be easy. It will take a lot of cooperation, perhaps more than the industry is used to giving, to weld the disparate elements of business and fandom into a team capable of mounting such a meeting. The Software Publishers Association (SPA), the gaming magazines, hardware and software manufacturers and gaming's creative community would have to pull together as they have not yet done.

Any project, even one of this magnitude, begins with a single step. I think that step should be the formation of an ad hoc committee for the National Electronic Gaming Convention. This body, perhaps initially under the aegis of the SPA, could study the question, evaluating good and bad points, and investigate the feasibility of the idea. Maybe a National Electronic Gaming Convention is one of those terrific concepts that won't work when things get serious, but maybe it will. I think it's time we find out. ♀



evening gathering in conjunction with a national convention would provide many gamers with the first chance they have had to meet the authors of their favorite games. People in the



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We're only two months away from the Big Event—the Game Doctor's 10th anniversary of serving the software needs of electronic gamers! Remember, each and every question published in the October *Game Doctor* column in VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT will be awarded a Game Doctor Prize Packet containing promotional items including buttons, belt buckles, pens and other flotsam collected during the Doc's first decade in practice mode.

Meanwhile, there's a Prize Packet to give out this month and a whole lot of questions in need of answers.

#### question

I am really interested in Koel's games, but I have a few questions:

1. Are these games created by Koel of America or are they only translated there?

2. If they are only translated by Koel of America, then who creates them and what is their address?

3. Do you think Koel will pay any attention if I sent them a scenario for a historical game?

—S. Nikrafter  
Vernon, Canada

#### answer

Koel's NES games are translations of computer games for IBM PC computers and those, in turn, have been translated into English by Koel of America from the original Japanese. Both *Nobunaga's Ambition* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* were produced by Kou Shibusawa and are even more popular in Japan than they are here in the United States, where they have been quite successful.

Even if you had a good idea for a historical scenario, it is extremely unlikely that a Japanese software publisher would buy it. I know of no case in which a Japanese publisher has purchased a game design or scenario from an American author.

#### question

I'm getting tired of all these silly arguments over which game machine has superior technical specifications, from people who really have no idea what they're talking about. Graphics resolution, 8- versus 16-bits and mem-



## INFORMATION ON THE SOFTWARE SCENE

by  
the Game Doctor

ory size are superficial comparators, so please stop these meaningless debates. It's not the hardware that matters, it's the games and their underlying concepts. *Tetris* was a brilliant idea which would have played just as well on an old Atari 2600 VCS as on a 40MHz 486-based PC.

Are TG-16 games any worse because you discovered that the CPU is actually only an 8-bit? Do you care how fast the microprocessor is that controls your VCR or microwave? Have you ever worried about the inner workings of your favorite coin-op? Of course not, so leave the technical details to the programmers and engineers, and judge the games on their own merits. Let's all stop being so uptight about the various inadequacies of particular systems, and just enjoy the hobby.

—James Hague  
Dallas, TX

#### answer

I sympathize with much of what you say, James. I agree that too many gamers have become fixated on comparing meaningless technical specifications and drawing illogical conclusions based on those comparisons. However, the difference between an 8- and a 16-bit processor is far from meaningless.

The brute fact is that each game system has a lifetime that results from

the system's popularity and technology. It is undeniable that a system's popularity is also closely related to its technology. That is not to say, however, that the most popular system is always the most technologically advanced, but the most popular system is never too far below the standards of its competitors.

You mention *Tetris* as an example of a game whose conceptual underpinnings are solid enough to sustain it even in a technologically primitive environment. This is true. It's also true that the success of the Game Boy has created a resurgence of interest in games with strong play value. But how many games are there that could be popular today, even in a 2600 format? Very few. The audience demands state of the art or as close to it as possible. Otherwise, the Atari VCS, Intellivision and ColecoVision would still be around.

Remember the Game Doctor rule of Thumb: When judging a system, test play a few of its most popular games. This will provide an excellent idea of its capabilities. Don't get hung up in meaningless specs, but you can't ignore the technology that drives a system, either.

#### question

I have been a fan of yours since the days of the old *Electronic Games* magazine (I still have the first issue, the one with the blue cover showing the game *Space Invaders* on a TV screen), and I still follow your column here in VG&CE every month.

I recently bought the Mega Drive game *Batman* and it is fantastic! It is the most expensive game in my Genesis library but well worth it. There are a couple of questions I'd like to ask, and I'm betting that if anybody can come up with the answers, the old sill-conn sawbones can!

When I got *Batman*, I noticed several things right away. First, the Mega Drive cart is shaped differently from my Genesis carts. Why do the Mega Drive and Genesis systems differ in console design and cart shape? I altered the top of my Genesis and now the Mega cart fits like a glove and works perfectly.

Next, why are the game instructions written in Japanese? I realize this game is intended for sale in Japan,



but when you plug the game in and begin play, the opening scenario describing the game is put on the screen in perfect English! What gives?

Fortunately for me, most of the game play in *Batman* is intuitive, so the lack of instructions in English was no big deal. But why on earth would an American gamer buy a Mega Drive game in the RPG vein that only comes with a nice lengthy introduction book written in Japanese? Or why would you want to buy an imported mag featuring Japanese games if the mags are not in English?

Before I forget, tell your patients to have patience—now that Nintendo has dropped its exclusivity rule, *Batman* by Sunsoft will probably show up as a Genesis cart some time down the road. Thanks again, Doc!

—Bob Steele  
Moberly, MO



Great letter, Bob. It's wonderful to hear from a longtime reader on the verge of my big anniversary. Makes the senile sawbones all misty-eyed.

The reason why the Mega Drive and Genesis have different consoles is because Sega wanted to keep its American audience distinct from its European and Japanese customers. Frankly, they want to keep Americans like you—yes, you, Bob Steele!—from getting their paws on Euro-Japanese software. This is called "gray market" software. It isn't black market, but it doesn't reach store shelves through traditional routes, either. Instead, games are purchased in Europe by middlemen and shipped for sale to the United States. Sega of America is making an effort to stop all gray-market Genesis software from reaching these shores.

As for why so much of this and many other Japanese games are in English, the fact is that English is very familiar to most Japanese, and English words are integrated into Japanese culture on every level. When Japanese business was rebuilding after World War II, many of the wealthiest customers were Americans. To this day, Japanese signs, advertisements and popular culture feature English intermixed freely with Japanese.

Your last question stumps me, Bob. I suppose some gamers are so anxious to have certain titles they are willing to gamble that they will be able to

dope them out. As to why they buy Japanese magazines, perhaps it's to look at the pictures and speculate about the captions.

Couldn't agree more about the Mega Drive *Batman* game, by the way, I hope you're right!

#### question

I would like to know why Sega shows us a picture of *Super Monaco GP* on an advertisement (Nintendo don't, Genesis does ad), and the picture shows a checkered starting line, crowds of people, buildings, etc. But when I bought the game, there was no starting line, people, etc. What happened? Same thing for *Joe Montana Football*.

Also, do you know if Sega (Genesis) or NEC (TG-16) are going to work on a hockey game?

—Patrick Houle  
Quebec, Canada

#### answer

Not sure about Sega, but Cinemaware showed a superb new hockey game for the TurboGrafx-16 at the Winter CES here in Lost Wages last January. It's called *TV Sports: Hockey*, and let's just hope that it doesn't get lost in the chaos produced by Cinemaware's unfortunate financial difficulties. Rumors also persist that Ed Ringle is in the process of updating his classic *Superstar Ice Hockey* (Mindscape) for home computers.

As for your first question, I suspect that the reason for the difference between game and game screen is that Sega probably used a screen shot from the coin-op original, since the Genesis version probably wasn't complete when the ad went into preparation. Even so, I think Sega owes gamers an apology every time something like this happens, since it is deceptive, unintentionally or otherwise.

The *Joe Montana Football* story is somewhat different. The original developers of the game, Mediagenic (who planned to base *Montana* on a game called *Hard Yardage*), had a parting of the ways with Sega, and at the last minute the project was given to a new developer (Park Place, developers of the similar *John Madden Football* for the Genesis), so the entire game changed at the last minute. Nonetheless, Sega is starting to get a bad track record in this regard.

From the dawn of the electronic

gaming era, publishers have faced the problem of what to do about playfield shots. Contemporary photographic technology and screen dumps make it possible to give gamers a pretty good idea of what a game looks like, but there are several guidelines the Doc would like to see the software publishers follow:

1. Always identify which version of a game the customer is looking at. If it's a Genesis screen shot on the back of an SMS box or an Amiga screen shot on the back of a Commodore 64 box, that should be clearly indicated.

2. A distinction should be made between animated and nonanimated screens. If a gamer is looking at a full-screen digitized photograph used in an introductory or expository sequence, that should be spelled out.

3. A further distinction should be made between photos of interactive and noninteractive screens. Many games feature spectacular, animated game introductions, but showing a photo of such a scene without properly identifying it is deceptive.

Often the screen shot is the customer's only guidance in the evaluation of a game for purchase. It is therefore incumbent upon publishers that they play fair in this regard.

By the way Patrick, your letter was this month's winner, but you didn't include your complete address. Please send it to the Game Doctor, pronto!

#### Q & A Quickies

Joseph Wong of Vancouver, Canada, wonders whatever happened to the vaunted Konix game system. Plans to bring the Konix to North America have fallen through, Joseph.

Walt Wyman of Walla Walla, Washington, asks another question. "Why don't any of the 16-bit home systems made today come with standard joystick ports? This may seem like a trivial complaint, but in a town like Walla Walla, it's difficult to find inexpensive, quality joysticks. I'm constantly mystified as to why Sega, NEC and Nintendo rejected the standard nine-pin port configuration invented by Atari way back when."

There are a variety of reasons, Walt, including the desire on the part of the Japanese to totally disassociate their products from the previous generation of video-game systems. But I think the main reason was the desire for more input. The old Atari standard was fine, but it had a major weakness: a single action button, whereas systems like the Genesis boast three, in addition to RUN and SELECT buttons.

Walt also wants to know my real name. "I've read your column all these months without once seeing your name in print," he says. Walt, you could've been reading this column for nearly ten years (gee, could there be an ANNIVERSARY coming up?), and the only name you'd ever see is the Game Doctor.

Remember, geng, send all questions, comments and corrections to *Game Doctor*, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107. I'll see you all in thirty-something!

# COMPUTER STRATEGIES

## Shedding Some Light on Night Shift

LUCASFILM  
Version: IBM PC

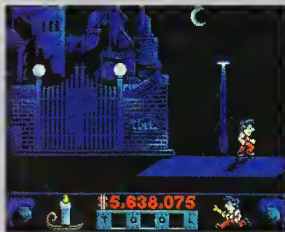
In *Night Shift*, gamers are employed by Industrial Might & Logic Ltd. to keep the company's machinery functioning long enough to produce a designated number of toy dolls. The "BEAST" is a giant mechanical gizmo that produces the dolls but tends to have a mind of its own. Players earn points by keeping the machine running and producing the correct dolls in the desired colors for that round.

The first thing to do is memorize the correct direction of each conveyor belt. Jot down a quick map of the belts with their direction in Round 1, since they are all running correctly at this stage. The most recurring problem is that gamers run into a switch-flipping pest that changes the direction of the conveyors.

Once gamers have a working knowledge of the belts, it's time to start production. Begin each round by riding the bicycle until the lights flash at a high speed. Next, check the indicators under the foreman's office to see which parts of the BEAST require immediate attention. In the earlier rounds, it is usually the resin machines that need repair. Immediately head upwards, checking all conveyors as you go. While you move, grab as many bonus items as possible. They are needed in the later rounds.

Once Fixit gets to the top, kick the solid-

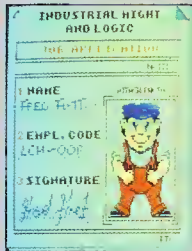
ifier supplier plug into the wall, and check the bolts on the resin machine. The siren stops when you succeed. Once you're done, head back down and ride the bike again to keep the lights flashing.



In the later stages, players are required to mix paint and monitor the quality control units as well as rid the plant of any pests that may hinder production. Always take note of the color of the paint machines, and stay close to them—the pests love to change the colors of the dolls. Remember to pull the chain and flush the vats whenever a new color is required. Should any pests be around, kick them immediately and drop a Venus's-flytrap next to the paint machines to prevent further tampering.

Another way to earn big points is to change the direction of the lower belts to discard defective dolls before they're fed to the quality-control unit. This is critical because defective dolls recorded by this unit cost the player money at the end of each round.

Keep a watchful eye on the resin tub to make sure the gray glop is coming out at all times. Should the pests change the five-position lever next to the solidifier supplier, the tub turns out blue bubbles and halts production. If this happens, quickly move the lever back toward the





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right to resume operations, and remember to check the plug while you're there.

In later rounds, it is necessary to get up and down the BEAST in a hurry. Experiment with different ways to climb the machine. In emergency situations, remember to use the balloons and umbrellas to move around quickly.

—Frank Tetro, Jr.



## Robbing Your Way to Success in Railroad Tycoon

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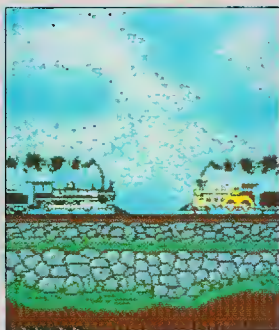


In *Railroad Tycoon*, a single player creates a railroad empire in one of four areas: Eastern United States, Western United States, England or Europe. The gamer manages the finances and day-to-day operations of the business while competing with up to three computer-controlled railroads.

Starting with \$1 million (or pounds, depending on the railroad's geographic location), a railroad must be created and run efficiently in order to survive. That's certainly one way to ride the rails, but there is another: a lazy player might prefer to become a robber baron, plundering other railroads for profit and pleasure.

The best place to become a robber baron is in the Western United States. In this area, the government subsidizes the bond prices so interest rates are lower than anywhere else. In the West, interest rates rise with every two bonds bought; elsewhere rates rise with every single bond bought. Lower interest rates make it possible to raise more money to buy other railroad stocks.

At the start of the game, lay track between two cities to create some income. Start a passenger and mail service and, if possible, a freight route. This tiny railroad will provide a small income, but, more important, it speeds up the entrance of the computer players into the game.



As computer players join in, let them develop their railroads and deplete their cash while their stocks rise. The best time to take over a railroad is when the railroad cannot buy 50% of its own stock with its cash on hand, plus \$500,000 (the value of one bond).

The first takeover will most likely be financed with bonds. Don't sell bonds indiscriminately because every transaction costs \$5,000, not to mention the interest payments charged each year. Make sure that it is possible to take over a railroad before selling the bonds. Calculate the total amount of money needed, and remember that stock prices rise 10% for every 10,000 shares bought (round your 10% up and round the computer's down).

The key to takeovers is to prevent the computer player from making more than one financial decision (buy stock or sell bonds) between your purchases. Change the game speed to slow so that time does not accidentally pass. Buy stocks, then as soon as the financial summaries window disappears, call the broker again to buy more stocks.

If for some reason your railroad needs attention, freeze the game. Otherwise a tender offer will have to be made in order to take over the railroad. This is much more expensive than buying stock. Call the broker repeatedly until the railroad is bought. The new railroad is then ready to be plundered. To generate quick cash, take money from the new railroad until it is unable to purchase its own stock at 10% below current price. At this point, lose control of the railroad (i.e., sell all stock above 50% ownership), and then call the broker. Regain control of the railroad, and take the money it has raised (from a bond). Continue this process until the railroad stops selling bonds.

Next, drain the railroad of its money, then start selling its stock. The key to quick high profits is to take over, drain and sell the railroad before the end of the fiscal period, causing its stock to plummet. When you've finished, you'll have a bank full of dollars—and have gained the "honor" of becoming a real robber baron.

—John Schnyder



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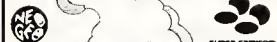
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